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1984

MAGAZINE

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TELEMETRY

Idi not like you make fun from him. Idi send bang bang squad come put out you lights." Letters from Idi Amin and other lesser illuminaries highlight this issue's fun-filled, expanded letters column!

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GREAT HERO

They just didn't make them like Uncle Euzekias anymore. Oh, he may have seemed like a mad old loon. But behind that crazed facade, little did anyone suspect, lurked the last of the great swashbucklers!

6

IDI RATMEN

Idi Amin's most endearing trait was his cornhole, one-track mind. He was convinced science could restore his long, lost manhood, despite the fact that there wasn't a scientist alive on all the earth!

14

T. STERNBACH

The nifty thing about marrying the king's daughter was that one night she would be a redhead, the next a shapely blonde. She could change her body at will. Hell, she could even become a man if she wanted to!

22

I WONDER WHO

Bill Daly had it all. Wealth, fame, power. He was a fantastic athlete, an incredible lover. To hear him tell it, he had housewives begging him for his essence. He was the kind of asshole husbands loathed!

30

LUKE THE NUKE

The instant Luke the Nuke emerged from sub-space, the solar command had his ship typed, his cargo scanned, his onboard computer rifled, and Luke himself identified as the rascal they wanted!

37

MUTANT WORLD

Father Dove didn't approve of the secretive experiments taking place in the underground complex. It was worse than a sin; it was blasphemy...growing vile things in test tubes. They had to be destroyed!

43

THE BOX

Once upon a time there was a box. It was a simple device, designed to pacify the masses. But when the vile spectre of unhappiness snaked its way among the people, the box knew that its reign was through!

51

KILLMAN ONE

Zoco was killman One, the most talented assassin ever to blow a hole in a Uranian wartworm. He had racked up an easy forty-nine kills. But kill number fifty would be the easiest of all: his wife, Fring!

60

REX HAVOC

An extraterrestrial, frozen in a block of ice, had just been found in the arctic. When Rex Havoc and the Ass-kickers arrived to save the day, they wondered if they hadn't seen this Thing somewhere before!

69

incoming telemetry



1984: THE BEST IN SCIENCE FICTION?

I used to think that **Jim Warren** was only interested in publishing horror magazines. Then I saw a copy of **1984 #1**, and like so many others, I'm sure, I figured it was **Warren's** attempt at jumping onto the **Heavy Metal** bandwagon.

But I was wrong.

1984 is the first such magazine that I have really enjoyed. The stories are interesting for a change, and the **Alex Nino** and **Richard Corben** strips are alone worth the price of the entire magazine.

I especially enjoyed **Nino's** "Mondo Megillah" in issue #4. What I would really like to see, however, is a **Nino** cover. His art is fantastic in color.

DAVID PUCKETT
Bowling Green, Ky.

Our sentiments exactly, Dave. We've already talked to **Alex** about producing one of his unique paintings as a cover for a forthcoming issue.

1984 is to illustrate fantasy what **The Exorcist** was to literature and film. It is an unsurpassed experience into the unknown.

The magazine's title brings to mind **George Orwell's** tale of a socially stagnant society, more than the future itself. The meaning lies not in the actual date, but the implications derived therein.

While **Close Encounters of the Third Kind**, often described as the definitive science fiction film, merely sets the stage for said film, **1984** not only sets the stage but supplies the characters, the situations, and even offers solutions (no matter how temporary or inconclusive).

WILLIAM COFFEIN
Richmond, Va.

I knew that **1984** was coming early. I also knew that in a lot of ways it was already here. I wasn't expecting anything like **Warren's 1984**, however.

Now that it's here, I'm overwhelmed and delighted. Thank you. You've given us warning of the insanity yet-to-come, and have proven that there is yet a slim hope for the future.

Your first issues have been great and should win you a horde of readers. I know it has taken guts to even think about presenting stories like "Last of the Really Great All-American Joy Juice" and "The Harvest." They are literally beyond anything I had hoped for.

ERNEST HOGAN
West Covina, Calif.

Even your worst stories are better than those in **Heavy Metal**, a magazine I thought was pretty good until **1984** came along. When the cover of your first issue blared "Number One" in bright, bold letters, you were right in more ways than one.

ROGER SMITH
Lamar, Colo.

I think **1984** is the best science fiction magazine published today.

DAVID HO
Winter Haven, Fla.

I have just today purchased **1984 #4**, and I'm still reading issue #2. Actually, I'm not reading it, I'm staring at it, literally stuck on **Richard Corben's** "Mutant World." The color and texture are so pleasing to the eye that I simply can't get enough of it.

Oh, don't get me wrong. The stories in **1984** are fantastic, too. But what really excites me is the art.

I noticed that with issue #4 you have raised the price of your superb magazine. I only hope the next increase won't come for many, many years. I would gladly pay almost anything for the calibre of stories and art found within the pages of **1984**. Not everyone would, however. So don't get any greedy ideas.

HENRY MEYER
Faulkton, S.D.

The twenty-five cent raise in price for our fourth issue was a temporary necessity, Henry, so we could cram in an extra eight pages of stories and art, and give our readers two full-color **Richard Corben** epics instead of the one story we are usually able to feature.

We would like nothing better than to keep the price of **1984** low, to attract the greatest number of readers. Yet, due to the exorbitant costs of printing and paper, we must pass on at least a temporary price increase, or completely do without those occasional special issues.



Beauty, horror, shock, humor, action, adventure, science, sex and fantasy have never been better combined so entertainingly in any magazine.

JAMES JEWEL
San Francisco, Calif.

Although it may still be too early to make predictions, **1984** magazine seems like a real winner. It looks as though each issue is destined to end up a collector's item.

P. MUNGIOLLE
Bronx, N.Y.

So far so good! Issues #1, 2, 3 and 4 were better than the average fantasy magazine. I hope we'll be seeing a lot more of **Idi Amin**, **Sally Starslammer** and **Mutant World**.

WILLIAM ELYEA
San Diego, Calif.

For a new magazine, **1984** is having a great debut. As long as you keep the stories and art as good as they have been so far, the magazine should be around until at least ... **1984**.

DAVID BOYINGTON
Pawasson, Ontario

1984: BRIGHTLY PACKAGED TRASH?

No matter how long you keep putting the word **adult** on your covers, you'll never be able to portray **1984** as anything more than it really is: **Brightly packaged trash**.

By my definition, adult entertainment is original, intelligent, thought-provoking stories. Merely abandoning the mores of the mainstream comics, allowing your characters to swear, make love and expose themselves, does not make an already-demeaning story any better.

Getting off the basic premise of the book, and down to the actual stories, **1984 #4** was probably the best issue so far. While "Last War of the Worlds," "Idi and Me" and "The Stunning Downfall of Muhammad Reptillicus" were of the usual low quality, all of the **Alabaster Redzone** features were at least literate. **Richard Corben** was also up to his usual standards.

RICK BERRY
Tempe, Ariz.

1984 is the ultimate in satirical, science fiction adventure. But please lay off some of the heavy-handed sex.

EDWIN WONG
Port Alberni, B.C.

Your first three issues of **1984** were terrific. However, "Illustrated Adult Fantasy" doesn't necessarily have to mean an overabundance of sex and vulgarisms, does it?

Truthfully, I would much rather see exciting science fiction and fantasy adventures without the aforementioned characteristics.

DOUG BRIGG
Ouray, Colo.

1984 is right in line with the grand tradition established by **Warren Publishing** long ago, of constantly appealing to the under-twelve mentality. The magazine contains the same wondrous level of mediocrity that has been carefully maintained under the **Warren** label.

I sincerely wonder if **1984's** enraptured editor used to beat off on old **Weird Tales** covers as a child. His stories remind me of the same shit I used to stroke off to in Junior High. Science fiction, tits and gore: That's the hit, folks. Don't expect too much more from **Warren Publishing**.

DAN PRESTON
Minneapolis, Minn.

I stopped buying **Warren** magazines a long time ago because of the poor artwork and production quality which, incidentally, have gotten worse since 1976. **Warren's** new magazine, **1984**, is one of the worst offenders, and possibly one of the most atrocious publications I have ever purchased. It is an insult to the science fiction and comics communities alike. I haven't seen a story on a par with **T. Casey Brennan's** "On the Wings of a Bird."

Considering that **Warren** has always had the potential for the best graphics and stories, due to their liberal editorial policies, I find the current state of affairs truly saddening.

DENNY DALEY
Chicago, Ill.

"THE HARVEST:" BIGOTED TRASH

I have been a fan of the **Warren** magazines since their beginning and was delighted to find that **1984** was a new publication of high **Warren** quality.

However, when I viewed the story "The Harvest" in your third issue, my attitude towards **Warren** was soured considerably.

Where was your sense of journalistic responsibility; what was your purpose in presenting a story about the hunting and butchering of black people for a Thanksgiving meal?

I was under the impression that **Warren Publishing** was above petty prejudices and social sicknesses. How can race relations improve when stories like "The Harvest" spread bigotry and distrust?

I'm willing to give you people the benefit of the doubt, and assume that you were trying to say something worthwhile. But the message was cloudy and will no doubt be easily misinterpreted by the very readers you've expected to reach.

CRAIG SCHINDLER
Sacramento, Calif.

"The Harvest" was both disgusting and racist. I know you think you're poking fun at bigotry, but this story went a little too far.

ADAM KAPLAN
Oceanside, N.Y.

I must point out that the story "The Harvest" is one of the sickest, goriest pieces of shit ever to see print.

CARLOS BUDET
Bronx, N.Y.

The gentlest statement I can make about "The Harvest" is that the story is in very poor taste. I don't see how **Warren Publishing Company** could allow such bigoted trash to see print.

BELINDA HARRISON
N. Highlands, Calif.

The story entitled "The Harvest" disturbed me very much. I was thoroughly disgusted after reading it.

Is your author/editor implying that blacks are little more than animals; that light-colored skin makes one more civilized?

Perhaps I'm missing the point of this story. If so, I'd very much like an explanation of the point that obviously floated so incomprehensibly by me.

ALPHONSO JILTON, JR.
Schenectady, N.Y.

I have been continually impressed with your new magazine **1984**. However, I have found the final story in issue #3 to be quite disturbing. I would like to know your purpose for publishing "The Harvest?" I get the distinct impression that you are implying blacks are inferior to other people. If I am wrong, please correct me.

DARLENE DAVIS
Brooklyn, N.Y.

The sole purpose of the story "The Harvest" was to bring one of the gravest problems facing mankind today to its most shocking extreme, and to make people aware that beneath a man's skin, no matter what color it may be, lies a human being with feelings, emotions and desires that are universal.

If the story shocked and outraged so many of our readers, we feel that it has been successful. Now if only some of that outrage could be channelled into correcting the actual problem.



MANIPULATE THE MASSES? US?

You people think you're pretty sly don't you? So far you've published stories that have insulted us ("The Last of the Really Great All-American Joy Juice" in issue #1), stories that have outraged us ("Scourge of the Spaceways" in **1984** #2 and "The Harvest" in issue #3), and stories that have slandered our great American heroes ("The Stunning Downfall of Muhammad Reptilicus" in issue #4).

These have all been powerful stories obviously designed for one purpose: to shock, anger, and wring the deepest emotions possible from your readers.

It's not a new ploy. **Hugh Hefner** and **William Gaines** did it in the 1950's with their **Playboy** and **Mad** magazines, respectively. **Matty Simmons** and **Born Again Christian Larry Flint** have accomplished the same end with their **National Lampoon** and **Hustler** magazines, right here in the '70's.

It's called manipulation of the masses. And depending upon how adept you are at playing the game; in other words, how successfully you can shock and outrage the few readers who pick up your initial issues, you can garner enough free (although vehemently adamant) publicity (word of mouth and otherwise) to lure the curious masses and make your publishing venture a success.

It's a bold and calculating trick, and **Jim Warren** (or is it **Bill DuBay**) must be congratulated on his (their) business sense. While **humor** and **sex** are fundamental necessities for human existence, **comic books** are not, however.

So while **1984** is not about to set the publishing world afire, it will be interesting nonetheless, to see just what degree of success it will attain.

SHARON FITCH
Los Angeles, Calif.

1984 #4 was, like the first three issues, highly provocative. And that's a good sign. If **Warren** can continue to produce a magazine that elicits such passionate response from its readers, both pro and con, **1984** can't help but be a full-scale success.

MAURICE HAFNAGEL
Warren, Mich.



"LULLABY" OUGHT TO RECEIVE AN AWARD!

I all but gave up on **1984** after reading the first two issues. Frankly, I was down to buying the magazine for one reason only: **Richard Corben's** miraculous art. His work is an ocean of genius in a sea of mediocrity.

But with the third issue of **1984**, things began to change for the better. There beside adolescent crap like "In the Beginning..." and "Dr. Jerkyl," were such solid stories as "Squeezin's" and "Commfu." Maybe there was still hope, I reasoned.

Then came issue #4, and the promise finally began to bear fruit. Artistically, the likes of **Herb Arnold**, the world's greatest **Corben** imitator, and **Jose Gonzalez**, have replaced such nebulous talents as **Nebot**. And there was "The Last War," "Ogre," "Boys' Camp" and especially "Lullaby," which, if there is any justice, ought to receive some sort of award.

Not that you've completely eliminated the trash. "Mondo Megillah" and "The Stunning Downfall of Muhammad Reptilicus" were interesting solely on a visual level. **Rex Havoc** would be more at home in **EERIE** magazine. And the second chapter of your **Idi Amin** series merely repeated the same asinine jokes we saw the first time around.

Needless to say, the latest episode of "Mutant World" was no disappointment.

Despite my criticism, **1984** does seem to be a magazine of great potential. I would very much, however, like to see it transformed into something more than a comic book with pretty pictures and near-worthless text.

BRIAN CADEN
Cincinnati, Ohio

THE INNER WORKINGS OF THE COMICS:

I've been fascinated by the stories and drawings published in the **Warren** magazines for years now. I've long wanted to write and express my gratitude for the pleasure I've derived from each of your publications.

I have several questions, though. How long does it take for a story to be conceived, written and illustrated? And, do you sell back issues of **1984** magazine?

RICHARD STRANGE
Philadelphia, Pa.

Stories are usually conceived in the middle of the night, Rich, when sleepless authors are visited by the good fairy of inspiration.

Depending upon how well they are researched and how often they are rewritten before receiving their author's approval, comic scripts can take anywhere from one day to one month until completion. Only the occasional author like **Jim Stenstrom**, who types with one finger, will spend more than a month on a single story.

The speed at which comic art is completed varies almost as greatly. There are illustrators who can render up to three finished pages per day, as does **Jose Ortiz**. And there are more meticulous artists, like **Joe Vaultz**, **Herb Arnold** and **Richard Corben**, for whom it is not unusual to spend three or more days working on one page of art.

So, as you can see, the time it takes to produce a finished story will vary as greatly as do human personalities.

As for your second question, check out page 68.

Letters continued on page 59

1986 A.D. A WEEK FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF SENATOR WOLMAN AVALON, HIS ONLY SON, **THOMAS**, WAS SUMMONED TO MEET HIS UNCLE, THE VARIOUSLY SCORNEO AND CELEBRATED **EZEUKIAS LONGVIEW AVALON**, FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME. FILLED WITH TREPIDATION, AND SUSPICIOUS OF THIS MAN HIS FATHER ONLY RARELY SPOKE OF, THE BOY WAS DELIVERED TO HIS UNCLE'S SECLUDED ESTATE.



MASTER THOMAS, IT IS A PLEASURE TO AT LONG LAST MEET YOU. I AM **JEEVES**, MASTER AVALON'S PERSONAL DOMESTIC.



IS... MY UNCLE AT HOME?

INDEED! AND HE IS EXTREMELY ANXIOUS TO MEET YOU!

WE WERE ALL STUNNED BY THE NEWS OF YOUR FATHER'S DEATH, MY BOY. YOUR UNCLE HOPES YOU WILL UNDERSTAND WHY HE COULD NOT ATTEND THE FUNERAL, BUT HE WAS WHOLELY PREOCCUPIED IN PREPARATION OF YOUR ARRIVAL.



I HEAR HE'S A CRAZY OLD SPOOK. IS IT TRUE? IS HE INSANE, JEEVES?



I ASSURE YOU, YOUNG SIR, NOTHING COULD BE FARTHER FROM THE TRUTH.

THIS WAY, PLEASE! THE MASTER'S DOWNSTAIRS. IN HIS CAVE!

The GREATEST HERO of TIME and SPACE!



THOMAS! HO! YOU'VE ARRIVED AT LAST!

I AM YOUR **UNCLE EZEUKIAS**... SOMETIMES SCIENTIST, NOVELIST, HERMIT, ADVENTURER, DETECTIVE, AND FULL TIME **LECHER**!

I'M THE CANTANKEROUS OLD FART OF WHOM YOUR FATHER WOULD NEVER SPEAK! 'BLACK-EST POLECAT OF THE AVALON FAMILY, A CURIOSITY OF SOCIETY, AND **MASTER OF ALL TIME AND SPACE**!

WELCOME TO YOUR **NEW HOME**, THOMAS!



AH...I SEE YOU'RE INTERESTED IN THE **DECOR!** TAKE IT IN SLOWLY, MY BOY. I KNOW YOUR FATHER HAS SAID SOME UNFLATTERING THINGS ABOUT ME...NOT ALL OF THEM UNTRUE! BUT I WANT YOU TO MAKE YOUR **OWN** JUDGEMENTS...AT YOUR OWN SPEED.

THESE ARE MY **GIRLS**, THOMAS. I WANT YOU TO MEET THEM, AND AT THE SAME TIME GET TO KNOW **ME**, AND WHAT I'M ALL ABOUT.

HULLO.

EZEUKIAS! HE'S **PRECIOUS!**



YOU'RE SOME KIND OF **EXPLORER**, AREN'T YOU, SIR?

EXPLORER! HO! YES! AS GOOD AS **ANY** TERM. I'M AN EXPLORER OF THE BOUNDARIES OF HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT.

BEHOLD THE **AVALON CHRONOSPHERE**...ONE OF MY **GREATEST** ACHIEVEMENTS! IT'S A **TIME MACHINE**, THOMAS!

JIMINY CRICKETS! **REALLY?**



ABSOLUTELY. ADELLE, JEEVES AND I USED THE CHRONOSPHERE ONCE TO HELP THE ALLIES DURING **WORLD WAR II!**

NO SHIT!

YEP. IT WAS IN 1942, IT WAS...!



JUST LIKE OIL TIMES

A TERRIFIC BATTLE WAS RAGING BETWEEN TWO GIANT OIL COMPANIES, BOTH OF WHICH DECLARED OWNERSHIP OF AN EXTREMELY RICH OIL FIELD IN THE EASTERN UNITED STATES. THE ALLIES NEEDED THIS OIL DESPERATELY FOR THE WAR EFFORT, SO PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT, TO WHOM I HAD ONCE CASUALLY MENTIONED I HAD A TIME MACHINE, ASKED ME TO VISIT THE **PREHISTORIC PAST** AND GET A **PRECISE** GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE AREA BEFORE THE CONTINENTAL DRIFT MESSED THINGS UP.

SO JEEVES, ADELLE AND I PACKED UP FOR THE **PALEOZOIC ERA**...TO THE VERY TIME THE OIL FIELD WAS BEING **CREATED**. WE WORKED FORWARD FROM THERE, TAKING MEASUREMENTS OF EVERY OTHER EPOCH, OBSERVING CAREFULLY THE OIL'S FLOW, AND THE SHIFTING IN THE CONTINENTAL SHELF. WE HAD TO HIGHTAIL IT **OUT** OF THERE WHEN THE BIG LIZARDS CAME INTO BEING, HOWEVER, BUT NOT BEFORE THE MATTER WAS RESOLVED TO EVERYONE'S SATISFACTION. **AND**...AS A TRIBUTE TO OUR WORK, ONE OF THE OIL COMPANIES ADOPTED A **DINOSAUR** AS ITS **COMPANY TRADEMARK**.



WOW! MY FATHER NEVER TOLD ME ABOUT THAT! YOU'RE A WAR HERO, UNCLE EZEUKIAS!

BOSH! JUST DOING MY BIT, THOMAS.

OFF WITH YOU NOW, ADELE. YOU'VE PREPARATIONS TO ATTEND.

G'BYE, ADELE.

BE SEEING YOU, TOMMY.



AND HERE, MY BOY, YOU SEE ANOTHER OF MY ACHIEVEMENTS! THE AVALON GROUND HOGS!

IT DIGS HOLES, CARVES MOUNTAINS, AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT ALL ELSE! YOU'LL HAVE TO ASK AGATHA HERE. SHE HELPED ME BUILD IT!

AGATHA DID? GOSH!



DON'T SOUND SO ASTONISHED. YOUNG MAN. ALL MY GIRLS ARE EXPERTS IN A WIDE ASSORTMENT OF SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGIES.

THESE GIRLS... AND JEEVES, WHO IS MY STRONG RIGHT ARM AND GREATEST ALLY...ARE THE VERY ESSENCE OF MY SUCCESS. WITHOUT THEM, I WOULD CERTAINLY BE LOST.

BUT ABOUT THE GROUND HOG...

SAME MOLE SONG



IT WAS JUST AN UNTESTED PROTOTYPE AT THE TIME...BUT A SERIES OF DREADFUL EARTHQUAKES IN TENNESSEE FORCED THE GROUND HOG INTO IMMEDIATE SERVICE. FIFTY MILES BELOW THE EARTH'S SURFACE WE STUMBLED ACROSS A CITY OF MOLE CREATURES, WHO ATTACKED US THE INSTANT WE EMERGED FROM OUR CRAFT.

AFTER A MUCH-HEATED BATTLE, COOL HEADS WON OUT...AND WE WERE ABLE TO DISCOVER THE DIFFICULTY. THE MOLES TOLD US THAT COUNTRY-WESTERN MUSIC WAS DEADLY TO THEIR KIND, AND THAT THEY CREATED THE EARTHQUAKES AS A WAY OF "BEATING ON THE CEILING" TO HUSH THE NOISE FUNNELING DOWN TO THEM FROM NASHVILLE. IT LOOKED AS THOUGH TENNESSEE WOULD BE DESTROYED UNTIL WE CAME UP WITH THE IDEA OF SOUNDPROOFING THE ENTIRE MANTLE WITH CEILING TILE. AND THAT SEEMED TO DO THE TRICK.

WE'VE BEEN FRIENDS WITH THE MOLE PEOPLE EVER SINCE. AND DURING A RECENT VISIT, THEY DEMONSTRATED THEIR OWN STYLE OF MUSIC TO ME: A PATTERN OF NOSE-HONKS WHICH I FOUND INTERESTING, BY NOT ENTIRELY TO MY TASTE.



APPARENTLY, A LARGE NUMBER OF SHIPS AND YACHTS WERE VANISHING MYSTERIOUSLY OFF THE FLORIDA COAST, AND THE COAST GUARD ASKED THAT I LOOK INTO THE MATTER. IT SEEMED LIKE JUST MORE BERMUDA TRIANGLE NONSENSE, BUT I TOOK ALICIA AND JEEVES ALONG IN THE AQUABELL, AND PLANNED TO MAKE A VACATION OF IT. WE HARDLY HAD A CHANCE TO GET OUR FLIPPERS WET BEFORE WE WERE CAPTURED BY EL DIABLO, A DEMON OCTOPUS AS OLD AS THE SEA ITSELF.

EL DIABLO WAS COLLECTING HUMANS FOR A MAMMOTH FISH-KABOB. BUT I NOTICED THAT AS HE WAS PREPARING ALICIA, HE WAS GIVING HER THE OLD FISH-EYE, AND HANDLING HER WITH A RATHER FAMILIAR IF NOT OUTRIGHT LEWD MANNER. NEEDLESS TO SAY, I BLEW MY STACK AND WENT AT THE LECHEROUS BEAST WITH MY CARVING KNIFE, HACKING AT HIM UNTIL JEEVES' TIMELY APPEARANCE WITH THE AQUABELL. TOGETHER WE JAMMED A DEPTH CHARGE UP THE SQUID'S NOSE, AND IN OUR OWN INIMITABLE MANNER, CLEARED UP THE CANTANKEROUS CREATURE'S SINUSES WHILE PUTTING AN END TO THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE DISAPPEARANCES ONCE AND FOR ALL.





SEEMS A FAMOUS NUCLEAR SCIENTIST HAD COMPLETELY **DISAPPEARED** WHILE INSIDE HIS LOCKED AND GUARDED LABORATORY. UPON CLOSER EXAMINATION WE DISCOVERED THAT HE HAD FALLEN INTO HIS EXPERIMENTAL ELECTRON MICROSCOPE, AND HAD DROPPED INTO A SUB-ATOMIC UNIVERSE, LANDING ON A **PLUTONIUM ATOM**. WE FOLLOWED IMMEDIATELY IN OUR G.A.V. AND THE RESCUE WAS **ON!**

WHEN WE FOUND OUR SCIENTIST, HE WAS ALREADY THE HOSTAGE OF A GANG OF RADIATION-DISEASED PISTOLEROS, WHO INHABITED THE PLUTONIUM ATOM AND WANTED **RANSOM** FOR HIM. I KNEW OUR TIME WAS EXTREMELY SHORT, AND THAT IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO DEAL WITH THESE SMALL-MINDED TYPES ANYWAY, SO WE PULLED OUT ALL THE STOPS AND MOWED THEM DOWN FAST. MINUTES LATER, WE ARRIVED SAFELY BACK IN THE LABORATORY WITH OUR SCIENTIST SAFE AND SOUND, ONLY INSTANTS BEFORE THE ISOTOPE WE WERE ON PLUNKED TO ITS **DESTRUCTION INTO THE ATOM-SMASHER.**



ZOOKA! ZOOKA!
BAM! BAM! HEY, I BET
THERE'S A BUNCH **MORE** OF
THOSE PISTOLEROS HIDING
OUT ON **OTHER** ATOMS!

ANYTHING
YOU IMAGINE
IS ALMOST
CERTAINLY
REAL **SOME-**
PLACE, LAD!

MY MACHINES
WILL TAKE YOU ANY-
WHERE, BUT THE TRIP
IS **USELESS** IF YOU
DON'T KNOW WHAT TO
DO WHEN YOU GET
THERE! AND THAT'S
WHAT I HOPE TO
TEACH YOU!



BY THE WAY, THOMAS!
I NEVER EXPLAINED THE
FUTURE CAPABILITY
OF THE **CHRONO-**
SPHERE!

LATER, ANGELA,
PLEASE! NOT WHILE
I'M TUTORING THE
BOY!

THE FUTURE
TOO! HOT DOG!

OH POOP!



YESSIEEE...
BUMPED INTO THE
FUTURE ACCIDENTLY,
ARIELLA, JEEVES
AND I...!

SO LONG,
KIDS. SEE YOU
AT THE PARTY!

AHEM!
AS I WAS
SAYING...!



TELL IT TO THE MACHINES

IT INVOLVED THE FANTASTICALLY CORRUPT GOVERNMENT OF THE **LORD MACHINA EMPIRE**, WHICH HAD ENSLAVED BOTH MAN AND ROBOTS IN THE YEAR 30,003 A.D. AS I SAID, WE STUMBLED ON IT QUITE BY ACCIDENT. WE WERE ONLY GOING INTO THE FUTURE TO LOOK AT NEXT YEAR'S CAR MODELS, BUT QUICKLY FOUND OURSELVES CENTER-STAGE IN A MONUMENTAL **HUMAN-AUTOMATON RIGHTS** CONFLICT!

WE WERE HORRIFIED TO LEARN THAT THE SMALLER ROBOTS WERE FORCED INTO SLAVE LABOR, AND HUMAN BEINGS WERE BEING **PULVERIZED** AND USED FOR FUEL. WEEKS OF FIGHTING, EVEN WITH THE VALIANT HELP OF THE HUMAN-AUTOMATA UNDERGROUND, PRODUCED NOTHING. THEN ARIELLA HIT ON THE IDEA OF TRAVELING BACK A FEW YEARS, AND DICKERING WITH LORD MACHINA AS HE CAME OFF THE ASSEMBLY LINE.

I DID, AND SUDDENLY HE BECAME MORE RESPONSIVE TO OUR DEMANDS, AND SIGNED THE **MAGNA-CARTA-ROBOTA**. EVENTUALLY LORD MACHINA AND I BECAME FAST FRIENDS, AND HE EVEN GAVE ME TIPS ON HOW TO REPAIR MY **ROBOT ASSISTANTS**.

R-ROBOTS?
YOU MEAN--!?

YES, THOMAS! ALL MY GIRLS ARE MACHINES. AND JEEVES, TOO. THE GREATEST OF MEN COULDN'T HAVE DONE THESE THINGS ALONE. BUT WHICH MEN, WHICH WOMEN COULD I TRUST TO KEEP MY INVENTIONS OUT OF THE HANDS OF EVIL-DOERS? FOR LACK OF AN ANSWER, I BUILT THE ASSISTANTS I NEEDED.

YOUR FATHER, THOUGH A GOOD MAN, NEVER UNDERSTOOD. BUT I BELIEVE THAT YOU CAN. THEREFORE, I WANT TO LEAVE ALL MY INVENTIONS, AND MY ROBOTS, TO YOU, SON.

SIR?

SOON IT WILL BE TIME FOR THIS OLD GUNFIGHTER TO HANG UP HIS GUNS. WHILE JEEVES AND THE GIRLS ARE IMMORTAL, I AM NOT. AND I DON'T THINK WE'LL BE ABLE TO LICK THAT PROBLEM IN THE SHORT TIME I HAVE LEFT.

SO I'M ASKING YOU TO LISTEN TO ME FOR THE NEXT FEW YEARS, AND THEN DECIDE FOR YOURSELF IF MY WORK IS WORTH CARRYING ON... OR IF IT SHOULD BE ABOLISHED AS AN OLD HERMIT'S FOLLY.

DO YOU THINK YOU'RE UP TO IT, LAD?

YES, SIR. I THINK SO.

EXCELLENT! IN THE MEANTIME, THE GIRLS HAVE BEEN PREPARING THIS WELCOME PARTY FOR YOU... AND I DON'T WANT TO KEEP YOU FROM IT ANY LONGER.

GO AHEAD. GET ACQUAINTED. I THINK YOU'LL QUICKLY DISCOVER THEY CAN BE BETTER THAN MANY RELATIONSHIPS YOU WILL FIND IN THE SO-CALLED REAL WORLD.

COME TO MOTHER, THOMAS.

OFF WITH THE TOP. NOW THAT DIDN'T HURT, DID IT?

RELAX, THOMAS. WE'RE GOING TO HAVE A PARTY!

WHOA! HEY! THAT'S MY SHIRT! I... WHOOPS! MY... PANTS! :ULP!

WHAT DO YOU THINK, JEEVES? BE HONEST, WITHOUT RESORTING TO YOUR DIPLOMACY PROGRAMMING.

IF I MAY BE SO BOLD, SIR...! I BELIEVE MASTER THOMAS HAS AN EXCELLENT CHANCE OF ONE DAY OUTDOING EVEN YOU!

LET'S HOPE SO, JEEVES. AS COMPLEX AS THE WORLD IS BECOMING EVERY DAY, HE'LL HAVE TO BE!

end

SO THERE WE WERE. ME AND THE LATE, GREAT **IDI AMIN**...STRUTTING OUR WAY THROUGH THE GRAND AFRICAN CONTINENT, ON THE ROAD TO NOWHERE, WITH BUT ONE ALL-CONSUMING GOAL: TO SURVIVE. YOU HAD TO GIVE US CREDIT. WE HADN'T DONE SUCH A BAD JOB **SO FAR**. WE'D MANAGED TO LIVE THROUGH THE RECENT **HOLOCAUST**: THE THIRTY SECONDS WAR THAT LEFT THE FACE OF MOTHER EARTH MORE POCK-MARKED THAN THAT OF A TEENY BOPPER O.P.-ING ON **HERSHEY BARS**. WE'D EVEN SURVIVED NUMEROUS ONSLAUGHTS BY ROVING BANDS OF RADIATION-CRAZED MUTIES WHO WOULD'VE LIKED NOTHING BETTER THAN TO TOSS OUR SUCCULENT BONES INTO THE NEAREST **STEWPOD**.

OH SURE...THERE WERE EVEN THOSE LUST-STARVED CRAZIES WHO WANTED TO DO **MORE** THAN MERELY **EAT US**. BUT OL' **IDI** WOULDN'T HAVE **ANY** OF THAT.

HE WAS STILL UNCHARACTERISTICALLY **MODEST** ABOUT THE NEW, BLATANTLY EFFEMINATE BODY WE HAD GIVEN HIM BEFORE THE WAR, AND WAS YET PRUDISHLY SQUEAMISH AT THE MERE THOUGHT OF HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY MALES ALIKE FINDING THAT BODY **DESIREABLE**.

MATTER OF FACT, **IDI**'S RAMPANT PARANOIA OF IMMINENT SEDUCTION ALMOST CAUSED US TO **AVOID** THE ONLY FRIENDLY FACES WE HAD YET TO ENCOUNTER IN THIS WAR-RAVAGED WORLD: A WANDERING TRIBE OF MAU MAU ITINERANTS, WHOSE MISFORTUNE IT HAD BEEN TO BE CAVORTING TOO NEAR THAT NUCLEAR CRATER ONCE-KNOWN AS **UGANDA**, WHEN THE BIG BOMBS WERE DROPPED.

THOSE WHOM THE FIRE RAINS HADN'T INSTANTLY **DEEP FRIED**, WERE IMBUED WITH MORE RADIOACTIVE HALFLIFE THAN A CASE OF **STRONTIUM 290**.



TELL ME AGAIN ABOUT THIS UNDERGROUND **BASE** YOU PASSED, GWANTU. DO YOU REMEMBER **WHERE** EXACTLY IT WAS?

*SEE 1984 #3--DUBE.

IDI and the RATMEN of HUNGER HOLLOW!



THESE RAG-TAG HUMAN BEINGS, WHO GOOD-NATUREDLY REFERRED TO THEMSELVES AS THE COCOA CRISPIES, OFFERED US THEIR FRIENDSHIP AND TEMPORARY ASYLUM. IN RETURN, IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT THEY WANTED ONLY TO GAZE FREELY AT THE GRACEFULLY RECONSTRUCTED FIGURE OF **IDI AMIN**!

IT FOUR DAYS SOUTH FROM HERE. BUT IT **BAD** PLACE TO GO. IT AM RUNOVER BY **RATMEN**!

RATMEN? YOU MEAN MEN WHO'VE BECOME LIKE RATS...? OR VICE VERSA?

IT HARD TO SAY.
SOME AM **BIG** LIKE
MEN. SOME AM
SMALL LIKE RATS.
THEM VERY **STRANGE**
FELLAS.

NO DOUBT
MORE **MUTATIONS**
CAUSED BY RADIO-
ACTIVE FALLOUT
FROM THE WAR.

IT BE GOOD IDEA
STAY **AWAY** OF
RATMEN. THEM NOT
BE GRUB-EATERS
LIKE GWANTU'S
PEOPLE. THEM LIKE
FILL BELLIES ON
MEAT FROM
MAN.

THAT AM
BE OKAY. **IDI**
HIMSELF SOMETIMES
LIKE CHOW DOWN ON
MANMEAT. AS LONG AS
THEM HEARTS NOT BE
FILLED WITH **LUST**.
THEM SOUND LIKE
GOOD-TIME GUYS
TO **IDI**.

"AH...BUT THEM
AM LUSTFUL
DEVILS! GWANTU HIM-
SELF HAVE SEEN
THEM DO POOTERIES
TO NICE MISSIONARY
LADIES FROM
BWANA CONVENT."



"THEM **RIPPED AWAY**
SISTER-LADIES NICE
PENGUIN DRESSES,
THEN GATHERED 'ROUND
FOR HAPPY-TIME FREE-
FOR-ALL! WHEN THEM
ALL DONE, THEM
HANG TIRED LADIES
FROM UPSY-DOWNSY
HOOKS AND WAIT
FOR THEM TO DRY
BEFORE HAVING OLD-
FASHIONED NUN-
BAKE!"

"SOME OF RATMEN
EVEN LET LITTLE
BROTHER RATS
NIBBLE ON
TOUGHER OF NUN-
MEAT TO MAKE IT
TENDER FOR LATER
EATING."



"NATURALLY, GWANTU WOULD
HAVE **SAVED** NICE SISTER
LADIES...EXCEPT FOR FACT
THAT HIM NOT REALLY KIND
OF GUY TO BREAK UP GOOD-
TIME PARTY...! ESPECIALLY
WHEN PARTIERS MIGHT BE
OF MIND TO BREAK UP
GWANTU AFTERWARDS!"





THAT AM
YUCHIE STORY. IT MAKE
I D NOT WANT MEET TOO
MANY **RATMEN** ON
DARK AND LONELY
NIGHT.

IT **GRUESOME**
BUT IT **TRUE**. GWANTU
NOT BE ONE TO TELL YOU
TALL TALE.

I **BELIEVE**
YOU, GWANTU. BUT I'VE
GOT TO FIND OUT MORE
ABOUT THIS UNDERGROUND
BASE WHERE THE **RAT-**
MEN MAKE THEIR HOME.

IF IT'S WHAT I
THINK IT IS...IT COULD
BE OUR TICKET BACK
TO THE **STATES**.



HEY,
HOLD ON FOR
MINUTE! **IDI** NOT
WANT GO TO **STATES**!
PEOPLE THERE NOT
REALLY **LIKE** IDI
ALL THAT MUCH!

IT **YOU** AND
YOU CAPITALIST DOG-
MEAT AMERICAN **FRIENDS**
WHO GIVE IDI THESE BIG
JALLAMAS, RE-
MEMBER!?

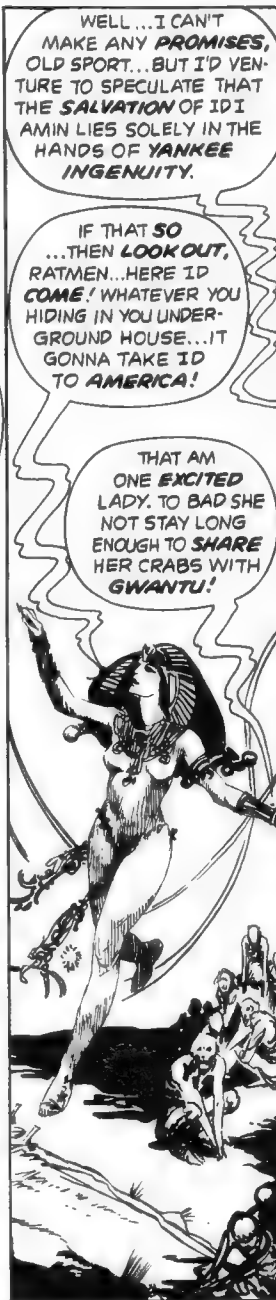
HOW CAN I
FORGET? NOTHING
ELSE HAS BEEN ON MY
MIND FOR THE LAST
SIX MONTHS.



BUT THAT **ASIDE**,
IDI...YOU NEEDN'T
WORRY ABOUT THE
RECEPTION YOU'LL RE-
CEIVE IN THE U.S.O.F.A.
EVEN IF THERE WERE
ANY SURVIVORS OF THE
LATE GREAT APOCALYPSE,
I GUARANTEE YOU THAT
THE **FURTHEST** THING
FROM THEIR MINDS IS
THE HEALTH AND WEL-
FARE OF **IDI AMIN**!

OF COURSE, IF
THERE WERE ANY
GOOP OLD FASHIONED
AMERICAN **SCIENTISTS**
STILL KICKING ABOUT...
THEY JUST **MIGHT** BE
ABLE TO RESTORE
YOUR LONG, LOST
MANHOOD.

WHAT!?
YOU MEAN
THERE IS **HOPE**
YET FOR ID?



WELL...I CAN'T
MAKE ANY **PROMISES**,
OLD SPORT...BUT I'D VEN-
TURE TO SPECULATE THAT
THE **SALVATION** OF IDI
AMIN LIES SOLELY IN THE
HANDS OF **YANKEE**
INGENUITY.

IF THAT **SO**
...THEN **LOOK OUT**,
RATMEN...HERE ID
COME! WHATEVER YOU
HIDING IN YOU UNDER-
GROUND HOUSE...IT
GONNA TAKE ID
TO **AMERICA**!

THAT AM
ONE **EXCITED**
LADY. TO BAD SHE
NOT STAY LONG
ENOUGH TO **SHARE**
HER CRABS WITH
GWANTU!



SO OFF WE WENT...**IDI** AND **ME**...IN
SEARCH OF THE UNDERGROUND **BASE**
OCCUPIED BY THE **RATMEN**. I ONLY HOPED
THAT IT WAS THE **SAME** **BASE** I'D HEARD
RUMORS ABOUT THROUGH THE SECRET
SERVICE GRAPEVINE BEFORE THE WAR.

FOLLOWING GWANTU'S DIRECTIONS...IT
WAS EXACTLY FOUR DAYS LATER WHEN
WE FOUND THE **BASE FIRSTHAND**!

LOOK OUT,
IDI! THE GROUND'S
CRUMBLING
BENEATH US!

OH **NO**!
EITHER THIS AM
BIGGEST **ELEPHANT**
PIT FROM ALL TIME...OR
WE FOUND UNDER DIRT
CITY OF **RATMEN**!

PRAISE THE GREAT LORDS OF TECHNOLOGY! THIS IS IT, ID! THE SECRET UNDERGROUND BASE...

...BUILT WITH RUSSIAN TECHNOLOGY, CUBAN FUNDS, BY AFRICAN WORKMEN, FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF SPREADING THE GOSPEL OF MARX TO THE STARS.

WE'VE GOT TO GET **DOWN** THERE. IF THAT LONE STARCRAFT IS ANYWHERE NEAR AS READY FOR FLIGHT AS IT LOOKS...WE JUST MAY HAVE OUR RIDE HOME.

WE'LL GET THERE, AND IF THERE'S ANY CHANCE AT ALL OF GETTING STATESIDE AFTER THAT, I'LL PULL IT OFF. BUT IF AND WHEN I **DO**, YOU'VE GOT TO PROMISE ME ONE THING, M'MAN...!

WHAT THAT?

THAT YOU'LL THANK ME BY LETTING ME SAMPLE THAT MAGNIFICENT **BODY** I GAVE... BEFORE YOU TRADE IT IN ON YOUR OLD, BEAT UP MODEL.

TOO BAD THE WORLD BLEW UP IN EVERYONE'S FACE BEFORE ALL THIS WAS COMPLETED!

SEEM LIKE LONG WAY STRAIGHT DOWN TO ID. HOW WE FIND WAY TO GET THERE?

YOU AM LOST CAUSE! IDI GLAD HIM NOT HAVE ONE-TRACK SEX-FILLED MIND!

DOES THAT MEAN I GET MY **WISH**... THAT MY SIX MONTHS OF ABSTINANCE ARE FINALLY ABOUT TO END?

THAT MEAN...IF YOU BRING UP SUBJECT AGAIN... IDI SHOVE YOU **HEAD** UP PLACE WHERE SUN DON'T SHINE!

SHIT! OF ALL THE PEOPLE TO SPEND ARMAGEDDON WITH... I PICK THE ONE WITH THE BODY OF AN **ANGEL**...AND THE MIND OF A **SLUG!**

YOU NOT SUCH **BAD GUY** FOR SLIMY CAPITALIST DOG! MAYBE SAME DOCTOR WHO FIXES UP ID CAN GIVE YOU BODY OF BIG BOOBED GIRL! THEN WE **REALLY** HAVE US A TIME, EH!?

OH! IDI CAN'T LOOK! BIG BLAST-OFF ROCKEY REMIND HIM TOO MUCH OF LONG LOST DINGUS!

I THINK I'LL **PASS** ON THAT, ID. I'VE KIND OF GROWN ACCUSTOMED TO THE EQUIPMENT I WAS ISSUED AT BIRTH!

HEY! YOU HEAR THAT? THAT... **SQUEELING** NOISE! IT SOUNDS LIKE--!

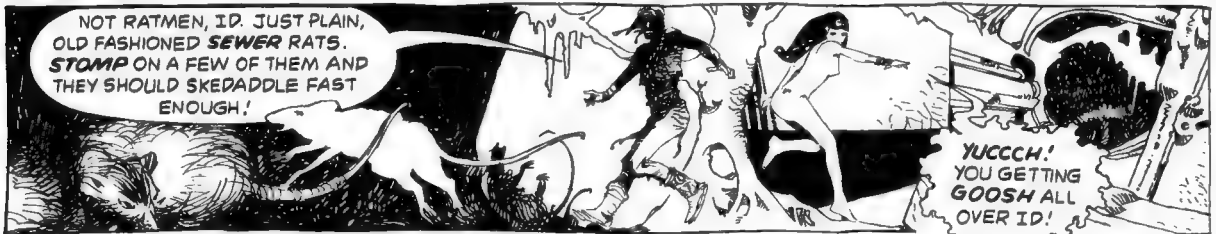
SCREEE!
SKITCH!
SKITCH!
SCREEE!



GOOD
GOD, ID! IT IS!
RATS!

GAAA!
NO...! IT...IT
AM LECHERING
RATMEN!

THEY
AFTER POOR
IDI'S BODY,
TOO!



NOT RATMEN, ID. JUST PLAIN,
OLD FASHIONED **SEWER RATS**.
STOMP ON A FEW OF THEM AND
THEY SHOULD SKEDADDLE FAST
ENOUGH!

YUCCCH!
YOU GETTING
GOOSH ALL
OVER ID!



WE'D BEST
PUT ON A LITTLE
SPEED...!

IF OUR
FRIEND GWANTU
WAS RIGHT ABOUT
THERE BEING **RATMEN**
DOWN HERE, THEY CAN'T
BE FAR BEHIND THEIR
SMALLER BROTHERS...!



UGH!
SOMETHING TELLS
ME THAT WE'VE
STUMBLED INTO
THE **RATMEN'S**
DINING ROOM.

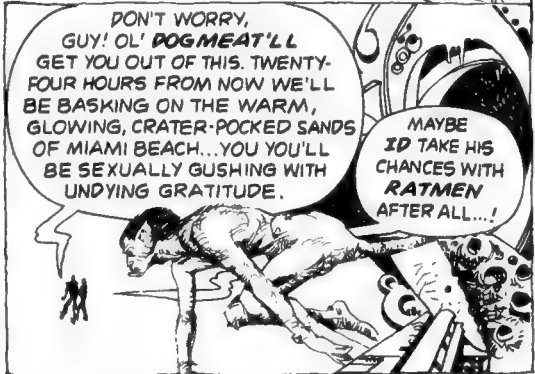
THEY
NOT BELIEVE
IN **WASTING**
MUCH, DO
THEY?



BETTER
TREAD **CAREFULLY**
FROM HERE ON, GUY.
WE'RE NOT ALL THAT
FAR FROM THE
ROCKET...

...BUT ONE FALSE
STEP AND WE'LL BOTH
WIND UP WITH AN INVITATION
TO A **DINNER** WE DON'T
WANT TO ATTEND.

AND
IDI KNOWS
WHO'LL BE FOR
DESERT!



DON'T WORRY,
GUY! OL' **DOGMEAT'LL**
GET YOU OUT OF THIS. TWENTY-
FOUR HOURS FROM NOW WE'LL
BE BASKING ON THE WARM,
GLOWING, CRATER-POCKED SANDS
OF MIAMI BEACH... YOU YOU'LL
BE SEXUALLY GUSHING WITH
UNDYING GRATITUDE.

MAYBE
IDI TAKE HIS
CHANCES WITH
RATMEN
AFTER ALL...!





RUN, ID! SAVE YOURSELF! GET AWAY FROM HERE AS FAST AS YOU CAN!

BUT... WHAT OF YOU?

I'M RIGHT BEHIND YOU, GUY! YOU DON'T THINK I'M GOING TO SACRIFICE MYSELF FOR IDI AMIN?

IDI COULD THINK OF LESS NOBLE WAYS TO GO!

HURRY!

THEY GETTING AWAY TO BIG FIRE STICK! STOP THEM!



LOOK! IDI SEE BLAST OFF SHIP JUST AHEAD!



WE GOING TO MAKE IT!

WE AM CATCHING LAST FLIGHT TO AMERICA!



THAT WE ARE, ID...! IF THIS SHIP IS FLIGHT-READY... AND IF ITS GOT ENOUGH FUEL TO GET OFF THE GROUND!

AND IF IT DOESN'T?



IF IT DOESN'T, YOU CAN BEND OVER AND KISS YOUR SWEET ASS GOODBYE...

...BECAUSE THOSE RATMEN ARE TOO HOT ON OUR TAILS FOR US TO COME UP WITH A VIABLE ESCAPE ALTERNATIVE NOW!

ER... IDI JUST THINK OF SOMETHING MAYBE IMPORTANT...!

IDI NEVER FLOWN ONE OF THESE BIG BABIES BEFORE! YOU THINK YOU CAN SWING IT?

HOW HARD CAN IT BE, GUY? IT WAS BUILT FOR COMMIE FLYERS... AND WE ALL KNOW WHAT DIPSTICKS THEY ARE... ER... WERE!



end

PROLOGUE

CONSIDER THIS: THERE ARE MEN WHO'LL LOAN THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS TO A STRANGER, WITH NOTES FOR THIRTY DAYS, NINETY DAYS, TEN YEARS. BUT... ASK THE SAME MAN TO BORROW HIS **WIFE** FOR JUST **ONE HOUR**, AND THE RESPONSE IS FAR FROM GENTLE.



THE OPERATIVE FACTOR HERE IS PRIORITIES.

MY NAME IS TIMOTHY STERNBACH. I HAVEN'T **ALWAYS** BEEN A WOMANIZER. BUT LATELY MY APPETITE FOR THE OPPOSITE SEX HAS BEEN VIRTUALLY **INSATIABLE**. FIRST, LET ME TELL YOU HOW IT ALL CAME ABOUT. LATER, I'LL FILL IN WHAT TRANSPIRED WHEN THE SPHERES **COLLIDED**.



I GREW UP VERY DIFFERENT FROM MY FATHER. HE WAS A LUMBERJACK; STRONG, HARD-WORKING AND STRICT. I WAS A DREAMER; SHIFTLESS AND IMPULSIVE. WE DIDN'T GET ALONG. SOMETIME AROUND MY TWELFTH BIRTHDAY, THE SITUATION BECAME INTOLERABLE AND I RAN AWAY.



BUT A STRANGE IDEA LODGED IN MY MIND: SINCE I WASN'T **LIKE** MY FATHER, I COULDN'T **BE** A FATHER. I WASN'T IMPOTENT OR STERILE OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT, BUT SUBCONSCIOUSLY I BELIEVED I WAS TOO **IRRESPONSIBLE** TO ACCEPT PATERNITY.

FOR A LONG TIME I **AVOIDED** FEMALES, CONVINCED THAT I WASN'T A WORTHY MATE. OH, THERE'D BEEN A FEW LIASONS, BUT THESE WERE GENERALLY BRIEF AND PASSIONLESS, AND SOON FORGOTTEN.



MY **TRUE** PASSIONS WERE GAMBLING AND SWINDLING. I WAS EQUALLY ADEPT AT BOTH, PREFERRING THE FORMER BUT OFTEN RESORTING TO THE LATTER.



THE FACT THAT I WAS **WANTED** IN FOUR STATES WAS INCONSEQUENTIAL. THERE WERE PLENTY OF STATES AND PLENTY OF SUCKERS LEFT UNTAPPED.

ONE NIGHT, IN A BORDER-TOWN SALOON, I MET LILAC; SHE OF THE BEATIFIC EYES AND SMILE-THAT-WOULD-MELT-STONE. SHE LOOKED AS INNOCENT AS THE FLOWER THAT WAS HER NAMESAKE, BUT EVERY MAN IN THE PLACE WANTED TO OPEN HER PETALS.



AND SHE HAD A THING ABOUT **MEN**.

SHE WAS A FIRM BELIEVER IN LUST AT FIRST SIGHT AND PRACTICED IT WITH ENTHUSIASM AND DEVOTION. BUT ALWAYS, AFTER THE SEDUCEE SUCCUMBED TO HER TEMPTATIONS, SHE'D HAVE NOTHING FURTHER TO DO WITH HIM. IT WAS RARE THAT SHE WOULD EVEN TALK TO HER "CONQUEST" COME THE FOLLOWING MORN.



MY ENCOUNTER WITH HER FOLLOWED THE SAME BASIC PATTERN.

LIKE THE OTHERS, I **TOO**, WAS FORTUITOUSLY CAST ASIDE. MAYBE IT WAS THE JOLT TO MY MALE PRIDE... MAYBE IT WAS JUST NATURAL CURIOSITY... BUT I BECAME FASCINATED BY LILAC'S UNCONVENTIONAL PHILOSOPHY. AND I FORTHRIGHTLY DETERMINED TO FIND OUT WHAT MADE WOMEN LIKE HER TICK.



THUS BEGAN MY ADVENTURES WITH THE OPPOSITE SEX. FROM THEN ON, I SAMPLED EVERY WOMAN WHO CHANCED ACROSS MY PATH; VIRGINS, WIVES, MOTHERS, NUNS AND WHORES! I GREASED MY AXLE IN CITIES AND TOWNS, LECHERING MY WAY TO NOWHERE!



MY PHILANDERING PROMISED TO GET ME TORTURED (AT THE VERY LEAST) BY ANY NUMBER OF JEALOUS HUSBANDS, IRATE FATHERS, AND OUTRAGED CLERGYMEN. BUT IT DIDN'T STOP ME. I WAS ON A QUEST MUCH MORE PLEASUREABLE THAN THE SEARCH FOR THE HOLY GRAIL.

EUPHEMISTICALLY SPEAKING, I SAMPLED THE FRUIT OF OVER A HUNDRED PIONEER LADIES OF EVERY SIZE, SHAPE, AND PERSONALITY. YET, I NEVER FOUND WHAT I WAS LOOKING FOR... THE KEY TO LILAC'S STRANGE BEHAVIOR.

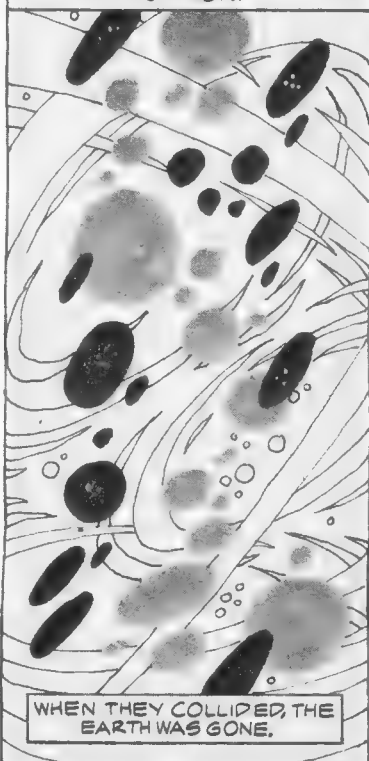


THEN, AT THE OUTSET OF A PERFECTLY ORDINARY DAWN, I ESPIED THE MULTICOLORED **SUNRISE**.



KALEIDOSCOPIC CLOUDS FLOATED ACROSS AN IRIDESCENT SKY. THE TOTAL IMAGE WAS THAT OF A BEAUTIFUL, BUT UNEARTHLY LANDSCAPE. IT WAS MY FIRST INDICATION THAT SOMETHING **MAGICAL** WAS ABOUT TO HAPPEN.

AND AS I WATCHED, TWO CRYSTAL-LINE SPHERES LIKE SMOOTH COMETS, CAME TOGETHER ON THE HORIZON.



WHEN THEY COLLIDED, THE EARTH WAS GONE.

TIMOTHY STERNBACH AND THE MULTI-COLORED SUNRISE!

THIS IS WHERE I FOUND MYSELF: IN AN INCONGRUOUS WORLD OF OFFBEAT IMAGES AND CONFLICTING ERAS, WHERE REALITIES WERE JUXTAPOSED UPON EACH OTHER IN COMICAL DISCHORD.

MY FIRST THOUGHT WAS THAT I HAD WITNESSED THE END OF THE WORLD AND GONE ACCORDINGLY TO MY JUST REWARD, BUT AS I SAW NEITHER HARPS NOR FIRE AND SMOLDERING BRIMSTONE, I DISMISSED THAT IDEA AS FALLACIOUS.

I ALSO CONSIDERED THE POSSIBILITY THAT I HAD PASSED THROUGH TIME, BUT IT SEEMED UNLIKELY; THERE WERE TOO MANY OBVIOUS ANACHRONISMS, THAT MEANT IN ALL LIKELYHOOD I HAD TRAVELED THROUGH SPACE... TO ANOTHER WORLD.

SOMEHOW THE COLLISION OF THE SPHERES GENERATED RAYS OF ENERGY THAT ENGULFED MY FRAGILE PERSON-AGE AND INSTANTANEOUSLY TRANSPORTED ME... HERE.

BUT W-WHERE IS HERE? WHAT HAPPENED? AND... AND WHY ME?

THE ORGAN GRINDER WAS PLAYING BACH'S TOCATTA IN D MINOR WHEN I INTERRUPTED HIM.

PARDON ME, I SEEM TO HAVE LOST MY WAY...

JUST GO UP TO THE CASTLE AND RING THE BELL. THE KING WILL EXPLAIN EVERYTHING.

AT FIRST, I'D SPOKEN WITHOUT THINKING, BUT I WAS ASTOUNDED NOW TO REALIZE THAT THE MAN HAD ANSWERED ME IN **ENGLISH!** SIMILARLY, THE SIGN BESIDE THE DOOR WAS IN MY NATIVE LANGUAGE.

WHAT A **PECULIAR** LITTLE DEVICE! MUST REMEMBER TO PATENT IT WHEN I GET BACK HOME.

RING BELL

DING!
DONG!

WELCOME, DEAR FRIEND! I AM YGOR, THE KING'S VALET! I LOOK FORWARD TO SERVING YOU...
HEH, HEH, HEH!

I... I'M HERE TO SEE HIS HIGHNESS!

OF COURSE. COME WITH ME.

I FOLLOWED HIM INTO THE ROYAL CHAMBER, WHERE I WAS GREETED BY A GHASTLY CACAPHONY: ANIMALS BLEATING, JESTERS JESTING, COURT LADIES GIGGLING, ALL UNDERSCORED BY THE MOST MELODIC **HARPSICHORD** MUSIC EVER HEARD.

THAT MINISCULE OGRE ON THE THRONE MUST BE THE **KING**. WHAT A **PECULIAR** LITTLE MAN.

KNEEL BEFORE KING BILT, YOU INGRACIOUS, MUDDLE-HEADED PEASANT!

GAAA! RETRACT YOUR TEETH FROM MY LEG, LACKY, OR I'LL BE FORCED TO **EXTRACT** THEM.

ENOUGH! ENOUGH!

THE KING HAD A TENDENCY TO REPEAT HIMSELF.

I TOLD HIM MY STORY. HE NODDED HAPPILY AT REGULAR INTERVALS AND, AT ONE POINT, CLAPPED HIS HANDS AND JUMPED UP AND DOWN, LAUGHING SHRILLY.

OH, THEY **WORKED**, THEY **WORKED!** THE **MAGIC SPHERE** **WORKED!**



WHAT... WHAT ARE
MAGIC SPHERES? HEY!
YOU'RE SLOBBERIN'
ALL OVER ME!

SMACK!
SMACK!
SMACK!

OH, I CAN SCANT RESTRAIN MY
ILLIMITABLE ENTHUSIASM! AS FOR
MAGIC SPHERES... WHY, THEY ARE
CONTAINERS OF MYSTICAL ENERGY;
PRERECORDED SORCERS SPELLS,
LOCKED WITHIN SPHERES AND SET
AFLOAT IN THE UNIVERSE, TO
ROAM UNTIL THEIR PURPOSE IS
FULFILLED.



THOSE PARTICULAR ONES WHICH
ENSNARED YOU WERE SENT OUT
EONS AGO TO SEARCH THE
UNIVERSE AND SEEK A SUITABLE
MATE FOR MY ELDEST DAUGHTER,
D'CUF. THEY'VE JOURNEYED TO
WORLD AFTER WORLD, TO FIND
A MAN WHO FITS MY PRE-
PROGRAMMED INSTRUCTIONS.

THAT MAN
APPEARS TO BE
YOU...!

GOOD
GOD!



GUARDS! GO
FETCH MY DAUGHTER!
THERE'S GOING TO
BE A WEDDING
TONIGHT! A WEDDING!

I WAS TOO ASTOUNDED TO **PROTEST**. I BRACED MYSELF, EXPECTING THE WORST. IT STOOD TO REASON, THAT IF THEY HAD TO SCOUR A WHOLE OTHER **UNIVERSE** TO FIND SOMEONE WHO'D MARRY THE KING'S DAUGHTER... SHE MUST HAVE BEEN A **DESPERATE** DOG.



I WAS WRONG.

THAT...
THAT'S
YOUR
DAUGHTER?
BUT... SHE'S
BEAUTIFUL!

TRUE!
TRUE!

BUT
CLUMMYSY!
A MORE
AWKWARD
GIRL NEVER
LIVED!



MY GOD!
SHE... SHE'S
DEAD!

AA'EEEE!

OOPS!
THERE SHE
GOES AGAIN...
TRIPPING
OVER HER
OWN
CUMBERSOME
CLOGS!



NO PROBLEM.
GUARDS! GET
ANOTHER
BODY FROM
THE STORAGE
ROOM!

YOU SEE, MY FRIEND... THIS IS A RECORDER SPHERE CONTAINING A PRE-PROGRAMMED PERSONALITY: ALL THE KNOWLEDGE AND CHARACTER THAT BEFIT A PRINCESS HAVE BEEN KEYED INTO IT, IT IS LITERALLY HER SOUL.

THUS IF A BODY IS DAMAGED WE SIMPLY **EJECT** THE SPHERE AND TRANSFER IT TO **ANOTHER** BODY. THE PERSONALITY OF COURSE REMAINS **IMMORTAL!**

BUT IF EVERY THOUGHT, EVERY ACTION IS **PRE-PROGRAMMED**, WHAT'S THE **POINT?** YOU ARE MECHANICAL OBJECTS... **MACHINES...** NOT HUMAN BEINGS!

BUT WE **REACT** AS HUMAN BEINGS AND WE **LOOK** LIKE HUMAN BEINGS! IF YOU SAW ONE OF US ON THE STREET, YOU COULDN'T TELL US **FROM** A HUMAN BEING! WHAT **MORE** DO YOU WANT?

I'M SORRY FOR BEING SO CLUMSY, FATHER. I'VE SIMPLY **RUINED** ANOTHER BODY, I'M AFRAID, I'LL TRY TO BE MORE CAREFUL NEXT TIME.

BEFORE I COULD EVEN ACKNOWLEDGE THE INTRODUCTION, THE GIRL HAD WRAPPED HER ARMS ABOUT ME AND WAS KISSING ME PASSIONATELY, FIERCELY ON THE MOUTH, HER TONGUE DARTING IN AND OUT LIKE THE PROBING PHALLUS OF A LECHER.

"**AMAZING!** SIMPLY **AMAZING!**" I SAID, STARTING TO SOUND LIKE THE KING.

I FELT MY BODY INSTANTANEOUSLY RESPOND TO HERS, AND GREW SLIGHTLY **EMBARRASSED**.

QUITE! YOU CAN EVEN TRANSFER PERSONALITY SPHERES TO BODIES OF ANOTHER **SEX!** IF YOU FEEL LIKE A LITTLE KINKY ROLE SWITCHING, IT'S ENTIRELY POSSIBLE JUST BY CHANGING **BODIES!** THE PERSONALITY REMAINS THE SAME OF COURSE, IRREGARDLESS OF THE OPTIONED **SEX!**

I WASN'T TALKING ABOUT THE SPHERE.

NEVER MIND DCUP! THIS IS A **HAPPY** OCCASION. I HAVE FOUND A **HUSBAND** FOR YOU!

THE PRINCESS DCUP WAS A TREASURE SO BEAUTIFUL THAT MEN WOULD'VE TRADED KINGDOMS FOR ONE KISS, OR CRAWLED THROUGH THE PITS OF HELL FOR ONE NIGHT IN HER PASSION-FILLED BED. MOREOVER, SHE WAS PROGRAMMED TO BE THE PERFECT LOVER AND THE PERFECT **WOMAN...**

I... I FEEL A LITTLE FOOLISH ASKING AT A TIME LIKE THIS, KING... BUT THERE ARE TWO THINGS I MUST KNOW, HOW IS IT THE SPHERES CHOSE **ME!**

AND IF YOU TELL ME THIS IS ALL A **DREAM**, I'LL POP YOU ONE!

I WANTED A MAN WHO UNDERSTANDS WOMEN! SOMEONE WHO'S HAD A GREAT DEAL OF EXPERIENCE WITH DIFFERENT TYPES OF FEMALES; SOMEONE WHO CAN HANDLE THEM! THE SPHERES DECIDED THAT YOU WERE THE MOST QUALIFIED.

I DON'T KNOW! THERE WAS AT LEAST ONE WOMAN BACK THERE I FAILED TO UNDERSTAND.

ENOUGH TALK, MY DARLING! COME... TO THE ROYAL BEDCHAMBER! MY EMPASSIONED LOINS ACHE WITH DESIRE FOR YOUR CAPACIOUSLY MANLY TOUCH!

WHOA! I HAVE ONE OTHER QUESTION THAT NEEDS ANSWERING. HOW MANY OF YOUR PEOPLE ARE PEOPLE AND HOW MANY ARE BODIES WITH BRAIN-SPHERES?

LAMENTABLY, I AM THE ONLY TRUE MAN LEFT.

IN RETURN YOU WILL HAVE WEALTH, POWER, AND THE HAND OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMAN IN TWO UNIVERSES! NOT TO MENTION, OF COURSE, THE OTHER PARTS OF HER ANATOMY AS WELL!

BUT MY DAUGHTER IS RIGHT. IT IS TIME TO PARTAKE OF WANTON DELIGHTS. YOU WILL BE THE SIRE OF THE ROYAL CHILD... THE NEXT KING!

DCUP WAS INDEED EAGER TO OFFER A GREAT DEAL MORE THAN HER HAND. HER IMPATIENCE WAS UNDERSTANDABLE IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT SHE'D BEEN A VIRGIN FOR "EONS", UNDOUBTEDLY BY ROYAL DECREE RATHER THAN CHOICE.



YET, IT BOTHERED ME THAT SHE BEHAVED AS SHE'D BEEN PROGRAMMED TO BEHAVE WITH A HUSBAND. EVERYTHING SHE DID SHE HAD TO DO. HER PRE-RECORDED PERSONALITY DICTATED IT.

HERE WAS A KINGDOM AND A GODDESS AT MY FINGERTIPS, IT WAS EVERY MAN'S DREAM. YET IT SEEMED SO ARTIFICIAL, SO DEHUMANIZED. TRUE, DCUP WAS THE PERFECT LOVER...



...BUT ONLY BECAUSE SHE WAS PROGRAMMED TO BE, IT WASN'T AS IF SHE ACTED OUT OF ANY REAL FEELING. AND IT MADE ME MISS THE HUMAN ELEMENT. PRIORITIES AGAIN...! WHAT CAN I SAY?

TELL ME, DCUP... WHY DID YOUR FATHER WANT A HUMAN HUSBAND FOR YOU? WHY DIDN'T HE JUST CREATE THE PERFECT MATE?

TO BE A KING, A MAN MUST BE PREPARED FOR ANY CONTINGENCY, NOT MERELY CONFINED TO ONE PRESCRIBED COURSE OF ACTION. SO OUR CHILD MUST HAVE HUMAN PERCEPTIONS... THE FEELINGS AND INSTINCTS ONLY HIS NATURAL FATHER CAN GIVE HIM.



YET, EVEN AS THE GIRL SPOKE, ALL THE OLD DOUBTS ABOUT PATERNITY CAME FLOODING BACK. HOW COULD I BE A NATURAL FATHER IN SUCH AN **UNNATURAL** ENVIRONMENT... WITH A MATE, YET, WHOSE BODY COULD CHANGE EVERY TIME WE MADE LOVE?



THE PLAIN TRUTH WAS, I WAS **HOMESICK**. I HAD TO THINK OF SOME **SCHEME... SOME SWINDLE**, TO CON THE OLD MAN INTO SENDING ME **BACK**!

CONGRATULATIONS, MY GOOD FELLOW. I BRING YOU A WEDDING GIFT, AS I PROMISED.



YOU'LL HAVE WEALTH, POWER, WHATEVER YOU DESIRE! ALL YOU DO IS HOLD THIS MAGIC SPHERE, AND **WISH**!

THIS WAS MY CHANCE! I HAD ONLY ONE WISH.



FATHER! HE'S VANISHING!

OF **COURSE**! THE SPHERE WAS DESIGNED TO RETURN HIM TO HIS OWN DIMENSION AS SOON AS HE TOUCHED IT. HE'D FULFILLED HIS PURPOSE. WE HAD NO FURTHER **NEED** OF HIM.



HE PROBABLY THOUGHT I WAS **SERIOUS** ABOUT THAT WEALTH AND POWER CRAP! POOR CHAP... HE WON'T BE HAPPY WHEN HE REALIZES HE'S BEEN **CONNED**. I WONDER WHAT HIS WISH **WAS**, ANYWAY?

I FOUND MYSELF JUST AS I **HAD** BEEN; ON A LONELY DESERT TRAIL, GAZING UP AT THE MULTI COLORED SUNRISE, WHICH WAS FADING FAST INTO BLUE MORNING LIGHT. THE MAGIC SPHERE WAS GONE, BUT THE MEMORIES REMAINED.



THE KING PROBABLY NEVER REALIZED THAT HE'D GRANTED ME **TWO** WISHES. **ONE** WAS A SAFE PASSAGE HOME... THE **OTHER** WAS MY ANSWER TO THE RIDDLE OF LILAC'S CURIOUS BEHAVIOR.



IT WAS THIS: LILAC WAS SIMPLY EXERCISING HER RIGHT TO BE **HUMAN**! WHEN IT CAME RIGHT DOWN TO IT, THAT WAS THE ONLY REASON SHE NEEDED, AND ALL I HAD A RIGHT TO KNOW. AS I RODE TOWARD THE NEXT TOWN AND THE NEXT WOMAN, I FELT VERY HAPPY... AND VERY MUCH **ALIVE**.

THEY ARE ANNOUNCING YOUR TRAIN AS YOU ENTER THE STATION. YOU BREAK INTO A RUN AS THE DOORS BEGIN TO CLOSE, FOR YOU MUST NOT MISS THIS ONE! YOU HAVE SOMETHING YOU MUST DO....!

I WONDER WHO'S SQUEEZING HER NOW?



! GASP! MADE IT!

TICKETS PLEASE!



WOULDN'T YOU RATHER PUT THAT ON THE RACK, SIR?

NO THANKS... I'LL KEEP IT!



I AM GEORGE KELTON... I AM FORTY TWO YEARS OLD... I'VE SPENT *TWENTY YEARS* OF MY LIFE RIDING THIS TRAIN...



...TWO HOURS EVERY DAY, TO AND FRO ... FOR *WHAT*...? SO RUTH AND THE KIDS COULD LIVE IN A HOUSE?

YOU STARE WITH UNSEEING EYES AS THE LANDSCAPE WHIRLS PAST,
FOR YOU ARE LOOKING BACK, BACK ON YEARS OF...

GEORGE,
I NEED A
MAID!

YOU'LL NEVER
GET **ANYWHERE**,
GEORGE... IF
ONLY YOU HAD
BRAINS LIKE
BILL DALY...!

YOU NEVER
TAKE ME
ANYWHERE!

...OF WORKING OVERTIME,
OF TAKING WORK HOME...

PUT ON A
SUIT AND
JOIN US!

CAN'T!
GOT TO
WORK!

FOR WHAT? FOR THE
CHILDREN?

DAD! I
NEED TEN
BUCKS!

NO!

OKAY...HOW
ABOUT **FIVE?**

SO THEY COULD GROW UP
SPOILED AND SELFISH?

IRENE! I'M
EXPECTING AN
IMPORTANT
CALL...!

GEORGE!
SHE HAS A
RIGHT TO A
SOCIAL LIFE!

WHATEVER YOU DID
IT WASN'T GOOD
ENOUGH...

BILL JUST GOT TO BE
VICE-PRESIDENT OF
HIS COMPANY!

PLEASE,
RUTH--!

YOU GREW TIRED OF
HEARING HOW WELL
OTHER MEN WERE DOING.

WELL? WHAT'S **WRONG**
WITH BEING
LIKE BILL
DALY?

NOTHING.
BUT I'M
NOT! SO...!

AND ONE DAY AS YOU
STARED AT YOUR
REFLECTION...!

I LOOK OLD...
PALE AND SICK...

...WHILE THEY GET
MORE TANNED AND
HEALTHY-LOOKING
EVERY DAY...!

THEY'RE
FEEDING ON ME!



11:03

BELLFLOWER!

BUT YOU STILL WANTED HER ...!

RUTH--!

PLEASE, GEORGE! I HAVE A HEADACHE... WOULD YOU SLEEP ON THE SOFA TONIGHT, DEAR?



EVEN THOUGH SHE DIDN'T SEEM TO EVER WANT YOU...!

YOU *USED* TO WANT TO DO IT... BEFORE WE WERE MARRIED!

WHAT A *ROTTEN* THING TO SAY!



AND THEN IT BEGAN...THE CLUES, THE DOUBT...!

HELLO?

CLIK!

WHO *WAS* IT, GEORGE?



I DON'T KNOW... THEY HUNG UP!

SUPPOSE YOU TELL *ME*!



THESE *COINS*... HOW DID THEY GET HERE?

WHERE?



ON THE *BED*! THE ONLY WAY THEY GOT THERE...

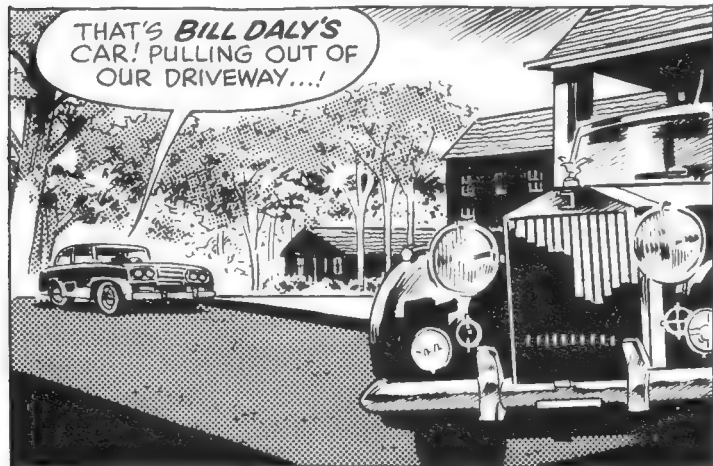
...IS THEY FELL OUT OF SOME MAN'S PANTS POCKET!

DON'T BE *SILLY*!



BUT YOU TOLD YOURSELF THAT THEY WERE PETTY, UNWORTHY SUSPICIONS...UNTIL ONE DAY, WHEN YOU MANAGED TO GET HOME EARLY...!

THAT'S *BILL DALY'S* CAR! PULLING OUT OF OUR DRIVEWAY...!



WAS ANYONE HERE TODAY, RUTH?

NO...NOT SINCE THE MILKMAN THIS MORNING... *WHY*?



THEN YOU SAW HER AGAINST
THE LIGHT...!



YOU RAN
AROUND
NAKED
ALL DAY?



I TOOK A
BATH...WHAT'S
THE MATTER?

I SAW BILL DALY'S CAR
LEAVING AS I GOT HOME!
WE'RE THROUGH,
BITCH! GOOD.



11:12

**HYDE
PLAZA!**



YOU TOOK A ROOM
IN THE CITY AND
SWORE YOU'D NEVER
GO BACK...!



GOD, HOW
I HATE HER!

IT WAS CRAZY, BUT THE MORE IT HURT, THE
MORE YOU HATED HER, THE MORE YOU WANTED
HER...! THEN, ONE DAY, YOU SAW THAT SWEET KID
SARAH LOOKING AT YOU ...!



HI, SARAH! DOING
ANYTHING TONIGHT?

NO...! I MEAN...
I...YOU AREN'T
ASKING...I MEAN
YOU'RE MARRIED!

YOU'D NEVER THOUGHT OF STARTING
UP WITH HER, ALTHOUGH YOU KNEW
SHE'D DO ANYTHING YOU ASKED...!



GEE, I
DON'T
KNOW!

OF COURSE, YOU LIED
TO HER A LITTLE...!



LOOK, I JUST WANT
SOMEONE TO TALK TO.

WELL--!

YOU TOOK HER TO ALL YOUR
SPECIAL PLACES, THE PLACES YOU
USED TO TAKE RUTH...AND YOU
FOUND YOURSELF BECOMING
VERY **FOND** OF HER...!



HAVING
FUN, KID?

OH, YES!

AND THEN SHE WAS IN YOUR ARMS, AND SHE WAS ALL THAT YOU'D WISHED RUTH WAS...AND YOU FOUND THAT YOU WEREN'T AS OLD AS YOU THOUGHT.



THEN...!



RUTH HAD AN EXCELLENT LAWYER....!

YOU CLAIM THAT YOU STARTED YOUR AFFAIR IN REVENGE!? DO YOU HAVE ANY **PROOF** OF YOUR WIFE'S INFIDELITY?

WELL, UH... I **DID** SEE--!



LOOKS BAD FOR US...TRY TO TALK TO HER ON YOUR OWN! IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO SALVAGE SOMETHING....!

CHRIST, I DON'T WANT TO DO **THAT**!



BUT YOU WENT...!

RUTH, I MUST TALK TO YOU...MAY I COME IN?

SURE, WHY NOT?



WELL, MY BOSS FIRED ME...DIDN'T LIKE THE PUBLICITY....!

I'VE COME TO BEG FOR MERCY...!LEAVE ME SOMETHING TO **LIVE ON**, RUTH....!



MERCY! HA! DON'T YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I **DESPISE** YOU? HOW I **HATED** TO HAVE YOU **TOUCH** ME?

RUTH, PLEASE.. THE CHILDREN--!



WHAT DO YOU CARE? THEY'RE **NOT YOUR CHILDREN**!



11:43

ANDREWVILLE!
NEXT STOP **LAURELHURST!**



DAZED, YOU FOUND YOURSELF
WALKING INTO THE NEAREST BAR--!

YEAH, THEY'RE ALL
THE SAME THESE
SUBURBAN WIVES!

IT WAS BILL DALY!
SUDDENLY WHAT HE WAS
SAYING PENETRATED...

THEY HATE THEIR
HUSBANDS...
THEY'RE PUSH-
OVERS FOR ANY
GOOD-LOOKING
GUY WHO--!

YOU
SON
OF
A
BITCH!

AS HE WENT TO WORK ON YOUR
FACE, YOU REMEMBERED HE WAS
A NAVY BOXING CHAMPION ...!

SARAH... YOU HAD TO SEE HER...
BUT AS YOU NEARED HER
APARTMENT BUILDING--!

WHAT
HAPPENED?

GIRL IN 3A TOOK AN
OVERDOSE OF
SLEEPING PILLS...!

DOESN'T LOOK LIKE
SHE'LL PULL THROUGH!

SAY,
WHO
ARE
YOU?

I'M...
I'M JUST
A FRIEND!

YOU'RE THE GUY
SHE WAS CARRYING
ON WITH! HER FOLKS
THREW HER OUT...
SHE LOST HER JOB...
AND NOW SHE'S
GONNA DIE! ALL
ON ACCOUNTA
YOU!

12:00

LAURELHURST!



AS YOU NEAR THE HOUSE ...!

DALY'S CAR! I'LL GET BOTH OF THEM!



BUT AS YOU CIRCLE ROUND TO THE BACK DOOR, YOU PASS AN OPEN WINDOW ...!

WHAT?

YOU SLUT!



I LOVED YOU... I LEFT MY WIFE FOR YOU!

HOW COULD YOU DO IT?



WHO IS HE? TELL ME, YOU WHORE!

TELL ME OR I'LL KILL YOU!



AS YOU WATCH, YOU FEEL SOMETHING SNAP... YOU TURN AWAY AND YOUR STEP IS LIGHT, THE PAIN INSIDE YOU IS GONE!

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN... ONCE A CHEATER, ALWAYS A CHEATER!

IT'S NO GOOD UNLESS IT'S ON THE SLY, IS IT?



WHATEVER IT WAS, IT'S OVER...! I DON'T HATE HER ANY MORE...! I DON'T LOVE HER ANY MORE...! I'M FREE!



I'M CALLING ABOUT MISS SARAH REED. IS SHE...

THANK GOD! CAN SHE TALK?



SARAH! OH, SARAH, HONEY... IT'S GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT...!

YES, I'LL GET THERE AS SOON AS I CAN!



end



LUKE THE NUKE

BRINGS IT IN!

THE EXACT SAME INSTANT **LUKE THE NUKE** EMERGED FROM SUB-SPACE, THE **SOLAR COMMAND** HAD HIS SHIP TYPED, HIS CARGO SCANNED, HIS ONBOARD COMPUTER **FILES** RIFLED AND THE PILOT POSITIVELY IDENTIFIED AS THE RASCAL THEY WANTED. THE ONLY THING THEY DIDN'T HAVE WAS **LUKE HIMSELF**. BUT THAT, TOO, WOULD COME.

AS EXPECTED, **LUKE** (ACTUALLY, CECIL ST. SWITHENS, BUT NOT EVEN HIS MOM CALLED HIM CECIL) BURST INTO SOLAR SPACE SWACK IN THE ASTEROID BELT BETWEEN JUPITER AND MARS. NOT THAT **LUKE** WAS BECOMING **PRE-DICTABLE**; THERE WAS JUST NO BETTER WAY FOR A SMUGGLER TO SNEAK INTO THE SOLAR SYSTEM FROM SUB-SPACE AND AVOID DETECTION BY THE **CUSTOMS OFFICIALS**, AND **LUKE THE NUKE**, THE **SMUGGLER FOLK HERO**, WAS STRICTLY UNACCUSTOMED TO **CUSTOMS**.

SO WHEN **LUKE** APPEARED, HIGH-BALLING IT THROUGH THE COSMOS IN HIS DUAL-THRUST PLUTONIUM DRIVE SPEEDSHIP, HEADED EARTHWARD, FOUR SPECIALLY OUTFITTED CUTTERS DRIVEN BY THE **SOLAR-COMMAND'S** CRACK TEAM OF **SMUGGLER-CHASERS**, WERE THERE TO GREET HIM.

TO HELP US UNDERSTAND THE MAD CHASE THAT FOLLOWED, LET US CONSIDER LUKE AND HIS SITUATION.

LUKE THE NUKE WAS AMONG THE MOST NOTORIOUS CUSTOM RUNNERS IN ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY YEARS OF SUBSPACE TRANSPORTATION. HE HIMSELF HAD BEEN IN OPERATION ONLY FIFTEEN MONTHS, BUT WAS ALREADY REGARDED BY HIS PEERS AS THE FINEST SINGLE RUNNER SINCE *BIGTIME BENNY BISMARCK* SCORCHED THE SPACEWAYS.

WHAT MADE LUKE SO SPECIAL WAS NO MORE COMPLICATED THAN THIS: HE ALWAYS BROUGHT HIS CARGO IN EVERY TIME. THROUGH METEOR STORMS WITH ONE ENGINE SHUT DOWN, AND CARRYING NOTHING MORE VALUABLE THAN A CRATE OF TARIFF-FREE CHOCOLATES, LUKE BROUGHT IT IN.

ANOTHER THING ABOUT LUKE WHICH PARTICULARLY ENDEARED HIM TO HIS CUSTOMERS, WAS THAT HE WOULD TAKE ON ANY KIND OF CARGO. STOLEN MERCHANDISE, EXPLOSIVES, WEAPONS, MONEY, DRUGS, FOOD, ANIMALS, PEOPLE. LUKE ASKED NO QUESTIONS.

BWADOM!

HIS ONLY REQUEST WAS THAT WHATEVER HE HAULED BE AS UNLAWFUL AS POSSIBLE.

ON THIS RUN, LUKE WAS DELIVERING SOME ILLEGAL ALIENS TO PICK ORANGES ON EARTH. SMUGGLING ALIENS FOR SLAVE LABOR WAS NOT A SERIOUS CRIME...NOT LIKE SMUGGLING *CENTAURI* SVELT CATS...BUT IT WAS THE BEST LUKE COULD DO AT THE TIME.

I'M APPALLED, LADY, 'CAUSE YOU'RE A BALD LADY...

WE REPEAT! THIS IS THE SOLAR COMMAND. YOU HAVE ENTERED SOLAR SPACE ILLEGALLY...

BEHIND THE CONTROLS, OBLIVIOUS TO EVERYTHING BUT THE EARTH-COUNTRY MUSIC TWANGING THROUGH HIS STEREO-PHONES, LUKE DID NOT HEAR THE WARNINGS OF THE SOLAR COMMAND. HE DID SEE AN ANNOYING FLASHING LIGHT ON THE COMMO PANEL, AND CLICKED IT OFF DEAD.

...NOT A TALL LADY LIKE I ASKED FOR!

BERKA?

BERKA BERKA!

SURRENDER AT ONCE! OR WE WILL DESTROY YOUR VESSEL! THIS IS YOUR LAST WAR--

CLICK?

ONCE THE COMMO LINE WAS CUT, THE SOLAR CUTTERS LEVELED FIRE ON LUKE'S SHIP IN EARN-EST. BUT LUKE ROLLED AND LOOPED, AND SUDDENLY PUT ON A SURPRISING BURST OF SPEED. IT WAS ALL THE CUTTERS COULD DO JUST TO KEEP UP WITH HIM.

SPEEDING VIOLENTLY PAST MARS, LUKE'S DESTINATION FLASHED SUDDENLY INTO SIGHT: A TINY SPECK FORTY MILLION MILES AWAY, THE PLANET EARTH.

ON EARTH, AT THE OTHER END OF THE RUN, WAS HOME PLATE: A SECRET SMUGGLER HANGAR HIDDEN INSIDE AN *ARTIC ICEBERG*. AT THE CONSOLE, LUKE'S PARTNERS... RUNNERS ALL...CHEERED HIM ON AS THEY WATCHED HIS ADVENTURE ON REMOTE RADAR.

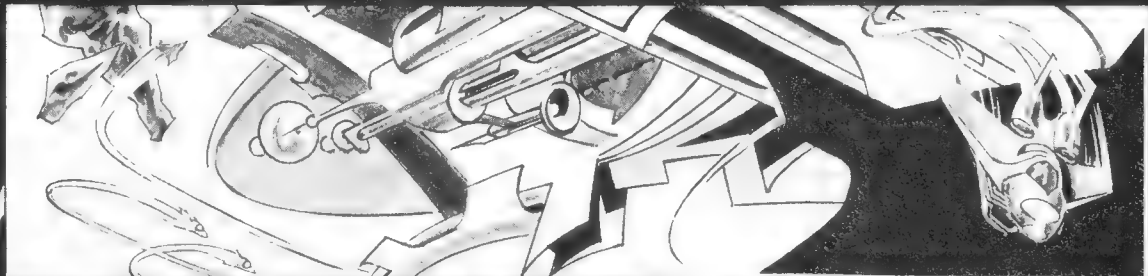
THOSE LAST THREE CUTTERS WON'T SHAKE!

C'MON LUKE! BRILL! IT IN, BOY!



DEAD AHEAD: A GIANT **FUEL TRANSPORT** BLOODING HOME FROM URANUS. LUKE DIDN'T SLOW, DIDN'T VEER OFF. HIS PURSUERS STUCK FAST TO HIM, BUT STOPPED THEIR FIRING WHEN THEY SAW THE WORD **"FUEL"** PROMINENTLY DISPLAYED ON THE TRANSPORT'S HULL.

INCREDIBLY, LUKE DID NOT PULL OUT OF HIS DEAD-ON COURSE WITH THE TRANSPORT, BUT INSTEAD PLUNGED THROUGH IT, ZIGZAGGING PAST ITS MASS OF EXPOSED MACHINERY AND BEAMS, AND OUT AGAIN WITHOUT ANY PAINT SCRATCHED. THE PURSUIT SHIPS DIDN'T EVEN CONSIDER SUCH A MANIACAL STUNT. THEY SIDE-STEPPED THE TRANSPORT ON TIP TOES.



IN ALL THE RAZZLE-DAZZLE TWO OF THE PURSUIT CRAFT NEVER REALIZED THEY WERE ON A COLLISION COURSE.

LUKE WAS AWAY AND LOCKED INTO **OVERDRIVE** BEFORE THE SHIPS EXPLODED IN A NOVA-LIKE DISPLAY OF FIREWORKS. THE FINAL PURSUIT CRAFT, THE **TEAM-LEADER**, SPED RIGHT AFTER HIM.



LED BY RAGE ALONE, THE LAST CHASER MUSTERED ALL HIS SPEED INTO ONE FEROCIOUS LUNGE, NEARLY CLIMBING ONTO LUKE'S BACK. THE **CHASER** ZEROED IN WITH HIS SUPERLASERS. IN A MOMENT MORE LUKE WOULD BE LOCKED INTO HIS SIGHTS.

BDOOIE!

ALL THE ELABORATE MEASURES THAT WENT INTO THIS OPERATION: THE FABULOUS SYSTEM OF **DECTOR SCREENS** INSTALLED IN THE ASTEROID BELT, THE REFITTING OF THE PURSUIT SHIPS, THE TRAINING OF THE SPECIAL **CHASER TEAM**... **NONE** OF IT COULD BE CO-ORDINATED SATISFACTORILY ENOUGH TO STOP **LUKE THE NUKE!**

YET, **INSIDE** LUKE'S SHIP, LUKE REMAINED BLITHELY INATTENTIVE TO ANYTHING EVEN VAGUELY **PRESENT TENSE**. AS HIS ALIEN PASSENGERS WRESTLED ON THE FLOOR OVER EIGHT EXTRA ACES IN THE CARD GAME, LUKE NURSED HIS FIFTH OF **OLD NUCLEAR PILE** (190 PROOF/ONE PART DEPLETED URANIUM TAILS). HE CONTINUED STOKING UP THIS WAY 'TIL HIS **EARS WHISTLED**.

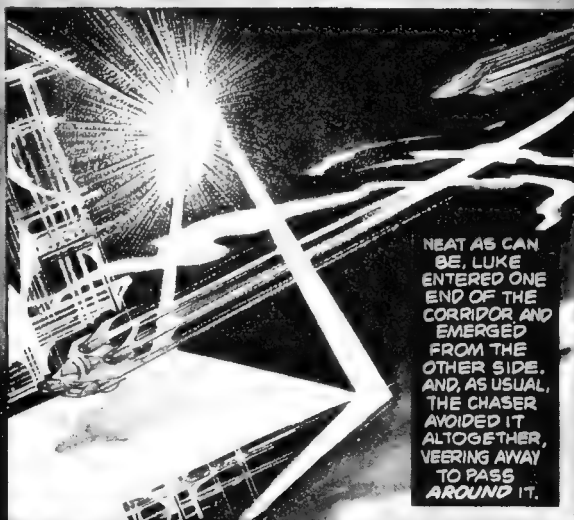
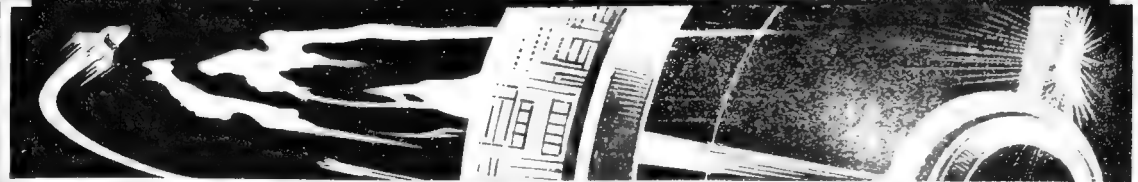
BERKA!
BERKA!

BERKA?
BERKA?
BERKA!

BERKA
BERKA
BERKA
BERKA!

THE PURSUIT SHIP HUNG ON LUKE'S EVERY TURN AND MANEUVER. TYPICALLY, WHEN THEY APPROACHED A HIGH-ORBIT **SPACEWHEEL**, LUKE TORE FULL-THROTTLE STRAIGHT **THROUGH** THE DOCKING HUB. THE CHASER AVOIDED THE HUB, PASSING BETWEEN THE SPOKES OF THE WHEEL, BUT LOST NOT AN INSTANT BY DOING SO.

THE SPACE JIG CONTINUED, BUT THE LAST CHASER WOULD NOT SHAKE. FINALLY, THEY CAME UPON ANOTHER, FAR LARGER, SPACEWHEEL, STILL BEING CONSTRUCTED. AS A GIANT **SOLAR MIRROR** WELDED ONE OF THE WHEEL'S CORRIDORS, LUKE AND HIS SHADOW ZOOMED **DEAD TOWARD IT**.



NEAT AS CAN BE, LUKE ENTERED ONE END OF THE CORRIDOR AND EMERGED FROM THE OTHER SIDE. AND, AS USUAL, THE CHASER AVOIDED IT ALTOGETHER, VEERING AWAY TO PASS **AROUND IT**.

AND THAT WAS THE CHASER'S FIRST AND **LAST** MISTAKE. BY **AVOIDING** THE CORRIDOR, HE FLEW DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF THE **SOLAR MIRROR** AND INTO THE PATH OF ITS **INVISIBLE** BUT POSITIVELY **DEADLY** BEAM.



THE PURSUIT SHIP WAS **SLICED** FROM STEM TO STERN BEFORE THE PILOT OF THE CRITICALLY INJURED CRAFT EVEN REALIZED WHAT HAD BEEN DONE TO IT.

AS THE LAST GENDARME WAS BLOWN AWAY, LUKE PUNCHED THE **ACCELERATOR**, GOING INTO A KAMIKAZE-LIKE **POWERDIVE**. EARTH, AND **HOMER PLATE**, WERE JUST MINUTES AWAY.

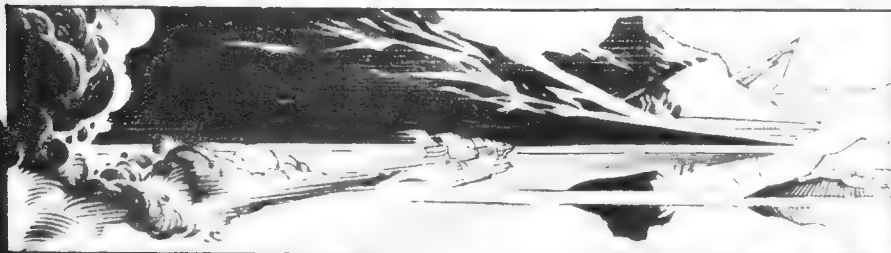


BUT SUDDENLY, LUKE WAS UNDER ATTACK AGAIN, BY A SORT OF **LAST LINE OF DEFENSE** RECENTLY INSTALLED BY CUSTOMS AGAINST USING UNAUTHORIZED ENTRY ROUTES TO EARTH.

A DOZEN TINY SATELLITES CONVERGED ON LUKE'S SHIP, **ATTACHING** THEMSELVES TO THE FRONT OF IT. THE **DISRUPTER SIGNALS** EACH SATELLITE EMITTED BEGAN WORKING ON THE SHIP'S **GYROS**, TRYING TO SEND LUKE INTO AN UNCONTROLLABLE SPIN THAT WOULD **DESTROY THE SHIP OR CRIPPLE** IT FOR LATER PICKUP.



LUKE NEVER YIELDED. AND AS A LAST DESPERATE MEASURE, HE BLASTED AWAY ALL HIS **HEAT SHIELDS**, AND THE SATELLITES WITH THEM. HIS PACE THROUGHOUT DID NOT SLOW ONE IOTA.



OVER THE ARTIC OCEAN, LUKE'S SHIP MANAGED TO SURVIVE **RE-ENTRY**, BUT ONLY JUST BARELY. BLACKENED, BURNING, WITH AN INCREDIBLE TRAIL OF BLACK SMOKE AND FIRE BELCHING FROM BOTH ENGINES, THE SEVERELY CRIPPLED SHIP HOBBLING TOWARD A SINGLE UNDISTINGUISHED ICEBERG. **HOME PLATE** WAS IN SIGHT.



AND WITHIN THE BERG...

HOT SHIT! LUKE IS GONNA MAKE IT!

THAT HAPPY SON OF A BITCH! HE'S GOING TO BRING IT IN!

BUT HE'S COMING IN TOO FAST! WE GOTTA GET THE DOORS OPEN FOR HIM!

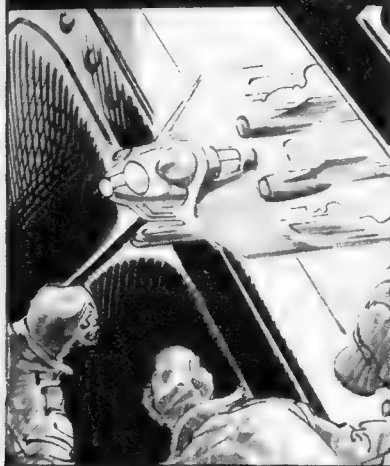


OUTSIDE, THE MASSIVE ICE WALLS PULLED APART, EXPOSING THE ICEBERG'S BOGUS METAL CORE. THE INNER DOORS TOO, SLOWLY SEPERATED WITH AN EERIE, PAINFUL GROAN...



BUT AS LUKE DREW VERY, VERY NEAR, IT WAS OBVIOUS THE DOORS OF THE HANGAR WERE NOT GOING TO BE ALL THE WAY OPEN BY THE TIME HE GOT THERE. GEARS SCREAMED AS THE ENTRANCED WIDENED, BUT SLOWLY... MUCH TOO SLOWLY!

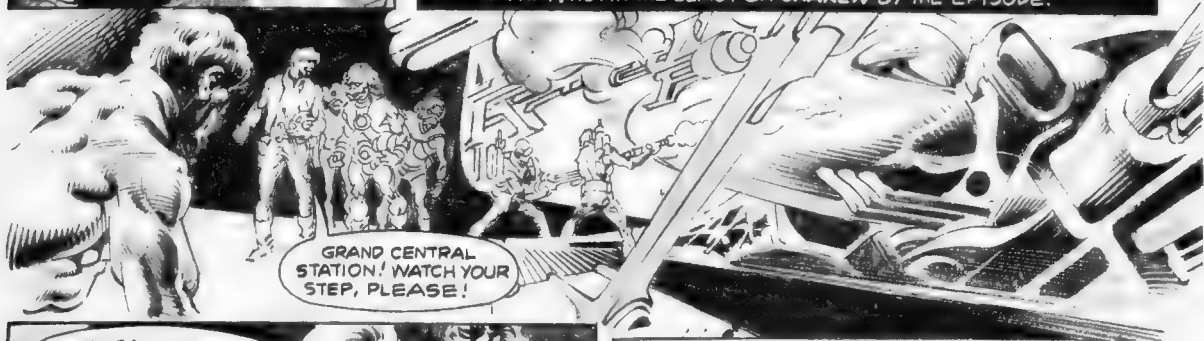
THEN, AT THE LAST POSSIBLE INSTANT, LUKE TURNED THE SHIP **SIDEWAYS**, ALIGNING HIMSELF **PRECISELY** TO FIT BETWEEN THE DOORS. AS HE APPROACHED, THE HANGAR CREW SCRAMBLED EVERYWHICHWAY... **ANYTHING** JUST TO **AVOID LUKE'S FIREBALLING SHIP!**



LUKE GOT THROUGH THE DOORS. BUT WITHOUT ANY WAY TO LAND, HE **CRASHED** INTO THE HANGAR, **CARTWHEELING** ON HIS SIDE OVER AND OVER, **WHOLE SECTIONS** OF THE SHIP BEING THROWN OFF AS IT TWISTED ITSELF INTO A SMOKING BALL OF ALUMINUM.



THE SHIP AT LAST CAME TO A CRUNCHING HALT AT THE OPPOSITE WALL OF THE HANGAR. BROKEN, CHARRED, RIPPED AND TWISTED (BUT THANKFULLY NO LONGER BURNING), THE SHIP LOOKED LIKE NOTHING MORE THAN A HEAP OF BARELY FASTENED METAL BITS. IT ONLY MADE **SENSE** THAT LUKE AND HIS PASSENGERS SHOULD BE **UNINJURED, UNTOUCHED**, AND (WELL, LUKE ANYWAY) NOT IN THE LEAST BIT **SHAKEN** BY THE EPISODE.



GRAND CENTRAL STATION! WATCH YOUR STEP, PLEASE!

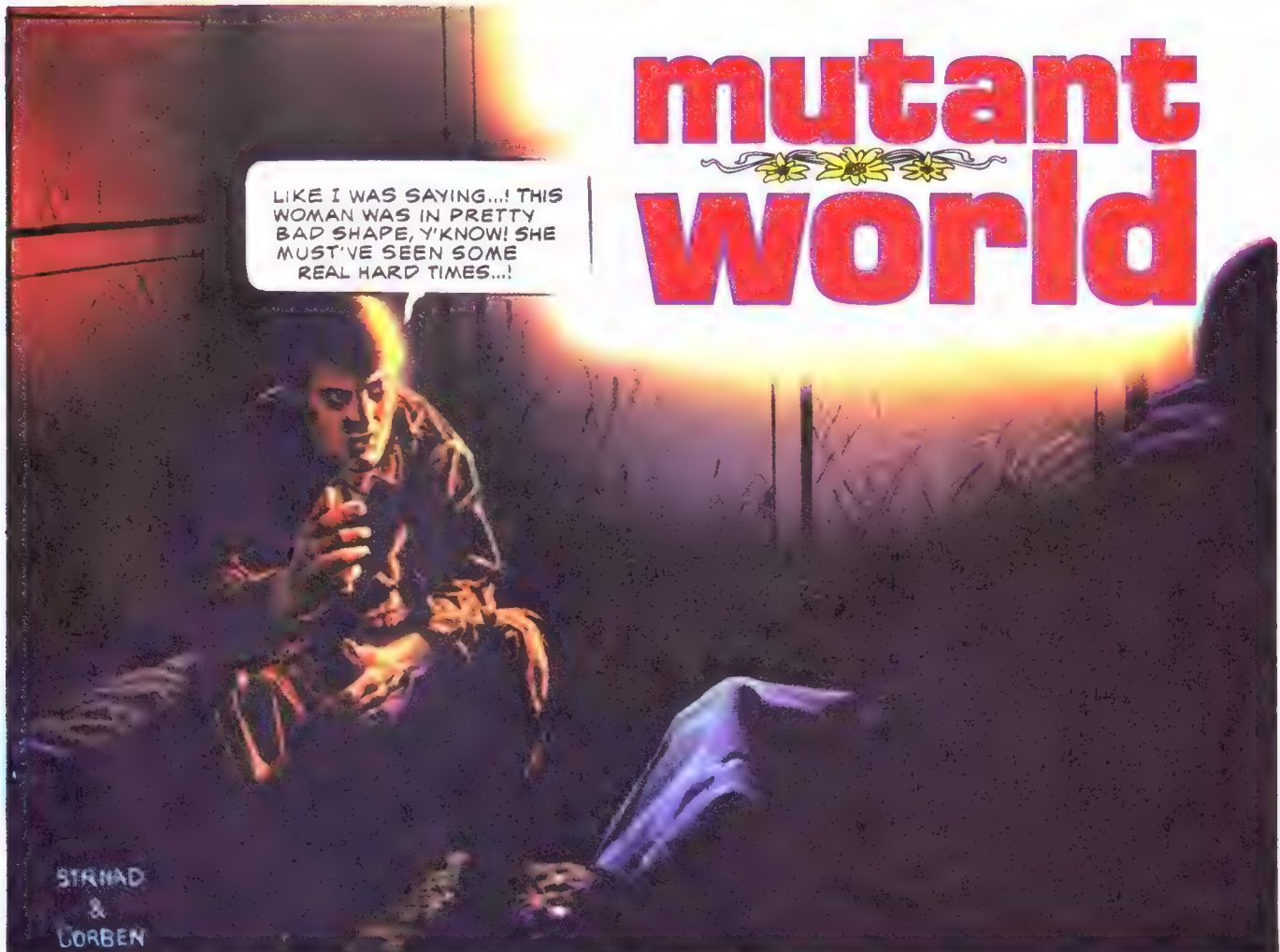
LUKE! THAT WAS TERRIFIC! THE GREAT-EST THING I EVER SAW!

THANKS, PIEFACE! GIMME A LIGHT, WILL YOU?

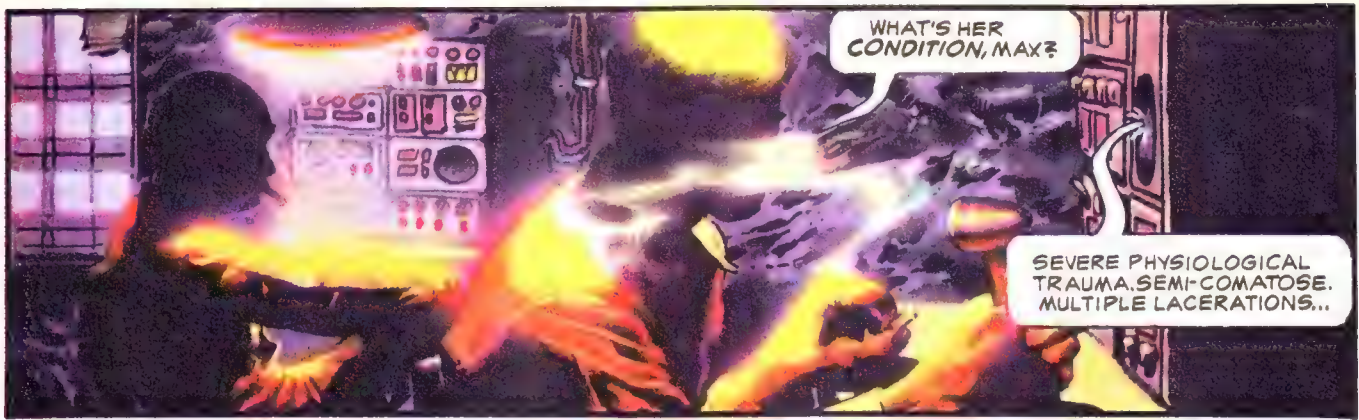
SURE, LUKE. MAN, THE WAY YOU **OUTRAN** THOSE FOUR SOLAR COMMAND SHIPS! ANYBODY ELSE WOULD **SURRENDERED** BEFORE TRYING THOSE CRAZY STUNTS YOU PULLED!

OH? WAS SOMEBODY CHASING ME?

end





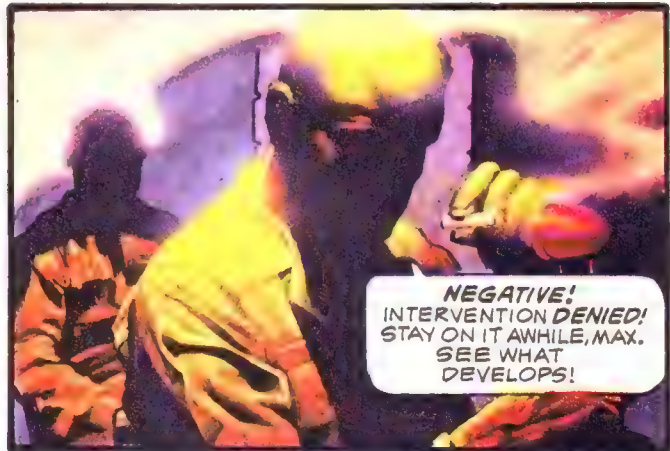


WHAT'S HER
CONDITION, MAX?

SEVERE PHYSIOLOGICAL
TRAUMA. SEMI-COMATOSE.
MULTIPLE LACERATIONS...



... CONTUSIONS, AND
PROBABLE INTERNAL
BLEEDING. CERVICAL
INFECTION: NEISSERIA
GONORRHOEAE. I'M
REQUESTING
INTERVENTION.



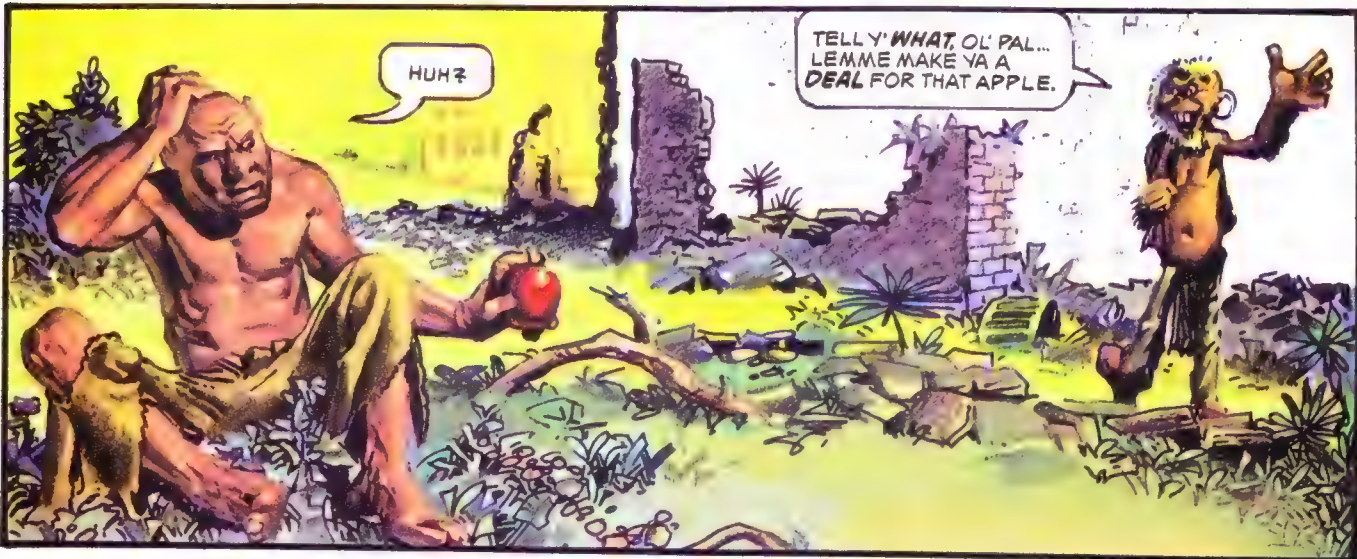
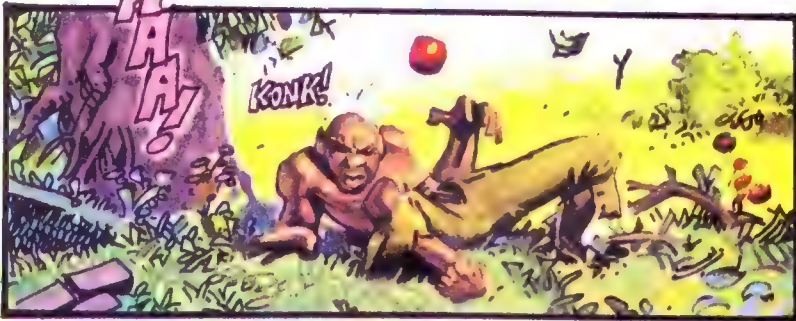
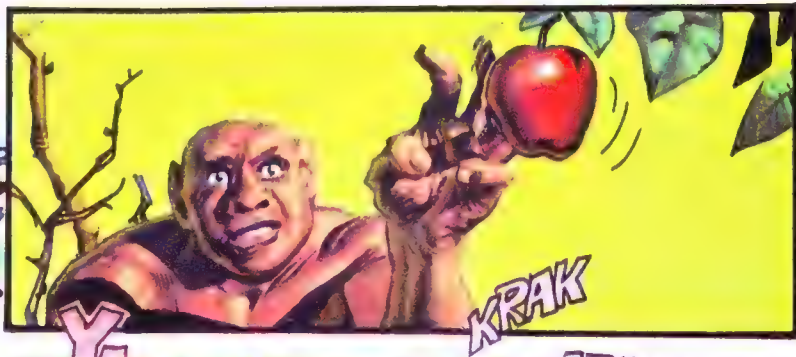
NEGATIVE!
INTERVENTION **DENIED!**
STAY ON IT AWHILE, MAX.
SEE WHAT
DEVELOPS!



HEY, JACOBS...WHAT
THE HELL'S NEISSERIA
GONORRHOEAE?



THE BASTARDS!





IS MINE! BUGS
ALWAYS TRICK
DIMENTO!

Y'WONT EVEN
TRADE FOR
SOME NICE SWEET
MEDICINE...?



M-MEDICINE?



HA! HA!
THE SAP!



EEEEEEEEEEEEEE!



AAAAA!

IS...IS ONLY MEDICINE!
IS GOOD FOR YOU!
PLEASE...! DIMENTO
NOT MEAN HURT YOU!

EEEEEEEEEE!

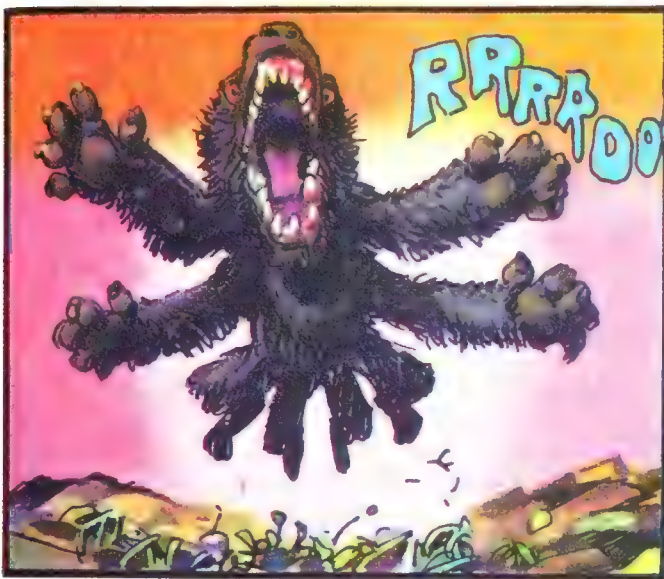
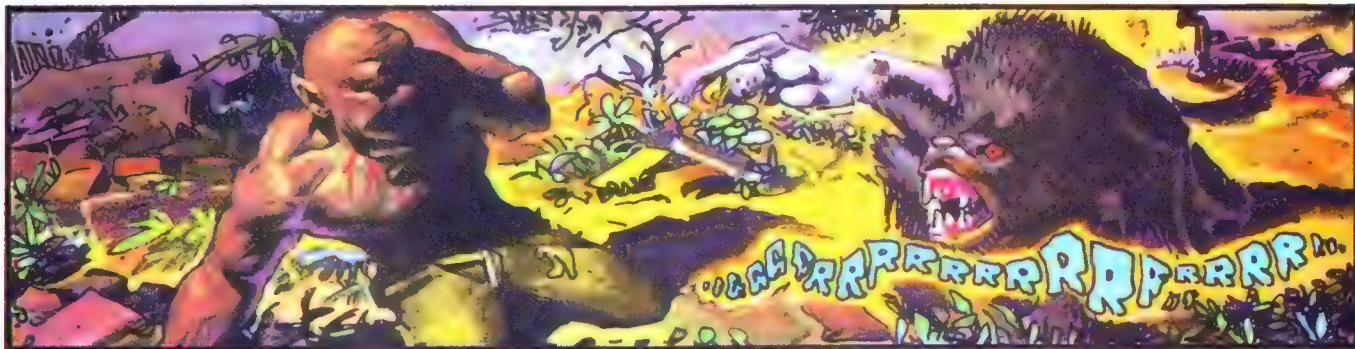


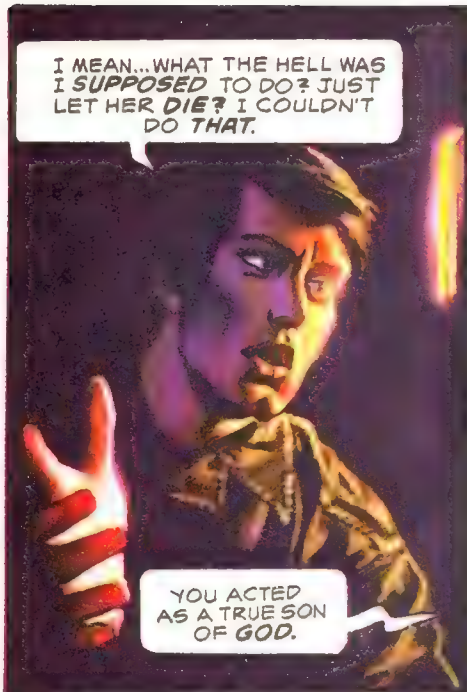
POSSIBLY LETHAL MIXTURE
OF TOXIC, HALLUCINOGENIC
FUNGI. REQUESTING
INTERVENTION!

AAAAAAAAAAAA!

SORRY,
MAX!







I MEAN...WHAT THE HELL WAS I **SUPPOSED** TO DO? JUST LET HER **DIE**? I COULDN'T DO **THAT**.

YOU ACTED AS A TRUE SON OF **GOD**.



I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT, BUT I DISOBEYED ORDERS AND BROUGHT HER BACK **HERE**, TO THE HOSPITAL! I GOT THROWN IN **PRISON** FOR IT, AND I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF THE SONS OF **BITCHES**'LL **HELP** HER.



AND WHAT OF THE **MUTANT**? DID YOU **KILL** HIM?

NO, HE WAS TOO **WEAK** TO CAUSE ANY TROUBLE. HE'D LOST A LOT OF BLOOD. PROBABLY **GONE** BY NOW.



I SHALL REMEMBER THE POOR LAMB IN MY PRAYERS.



P-PRETTY LADY...



D-DIMENTO... HERE... PRETTY... LADY! D-DIMENTO... **SAVE**... YOU...!

CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE!

a short but wonderous parable called...

FOR SOME REASON I'VE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO FIGURE OUT, STORIES LIKE THIS ONE ALWAYS SEEM TO START WITH "*ONCE UPON A TIME!*"

YOU KNOW, LIKE "ONCE UPON A TIME, IN A KINGDOM BY THE SEA..." OR "ONCE UPON A TIME, IN THE LAND OF NOD..." OR "ONCE UPON A TIME, IN A CHEAP GIN JOINT ON SIRIUS IV..." *THAT SORT OF STUFF!*



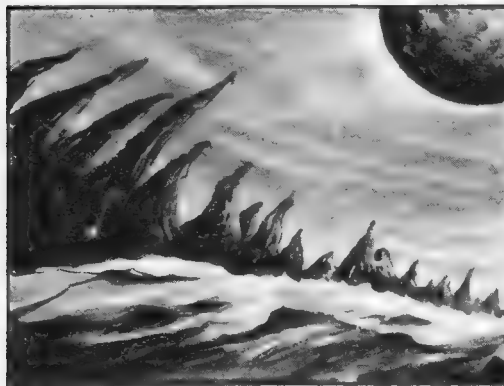
WELL, NEVER BEING ONE TO BREAK WITH TRADITION, I MIGHT AS WELL START OFF THE *SAME!* SO HERE GOES...

ONCE UPON A TIME, THIS WORLD WAS *GREEN*...THE AIR WAS *FRESH*...THE EARTH WAS *RICH*...THE SEAS WERE *PURE*...

BUT THAT WAS ONLY *ONCE* UPON A TIME, BEFORE THE PAY OF...

THE BOX!

Author: LEN WEIN/Illustrators: MIKE NASSAR and ALFREDO ALCALA

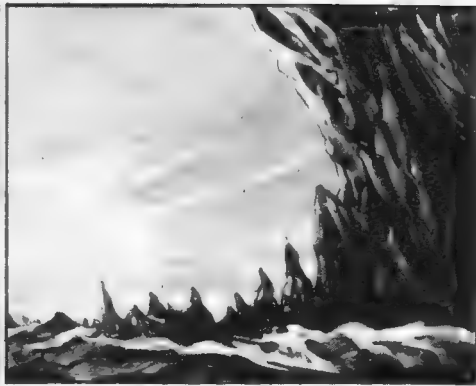


THESE DAYS, THE AIR IS **GRAY**...AND THE EARTH IS **BLACK**...AND THE SEAS **BROWN**...!

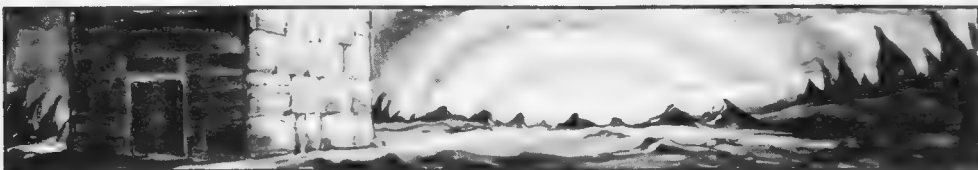
THE WORLD IS **DESOLATE**!



EXCEPT, THAT IS, FOR THE **BLACK TOWER**!



THAT LONELY MONOLITHIC STRUCTURE WHICH **RISES** LIKE SOME SORT OF OBSCENE **PHALLUS** FROM THE SWIRLING DUST AND ASHES THAT SURROUND IT.



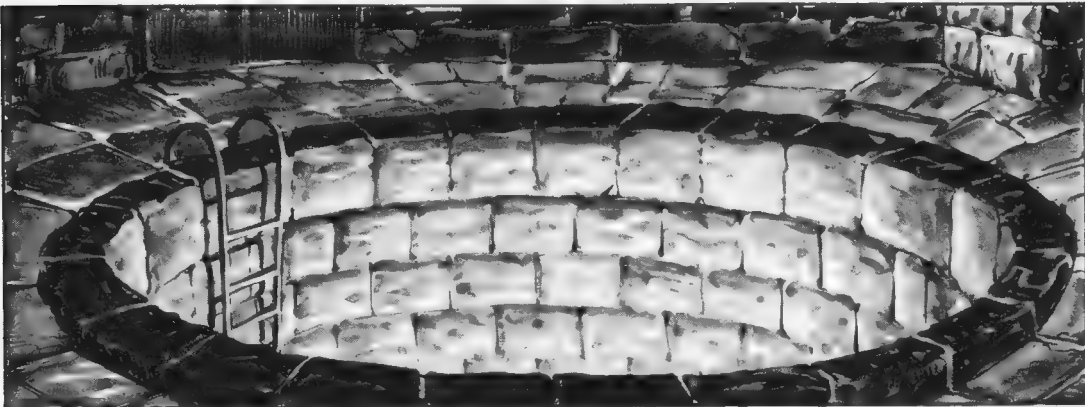
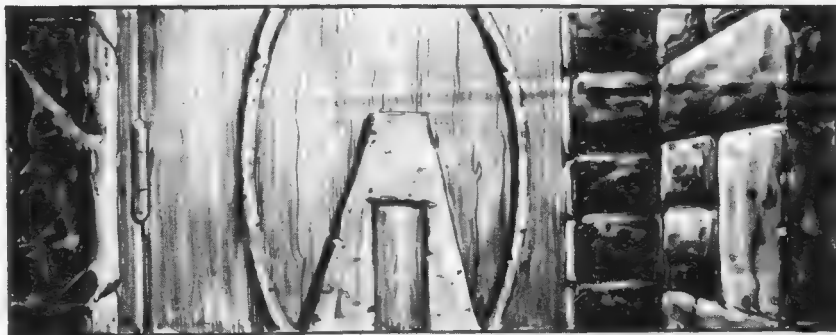
HEY! THAT SOUNDED PRETTY DAMNED GOOD! Y'KNOW, THIS STORY-TELLING STUFF ISN'T HALF AS **TOUGH** AS IT'S CRACKED UP TO BE! NOW WHERE **WAS** I? OH, YEAH....!



ON THE SIDE OF THE TOWER, THERE IS A **DOOR** CONSTRUCTED BY CRAFTSMEN LONG SINCE FORGOTTEN, AND RUSTED SHUT WITH **AGE**!

IT WOULD TAKE A MAN WORKING WITH A HAMMER, CHISEL AND **LASERTORCH** BETTER THAN HALF A DAY TO **OPEN** THAT **DOOR**...!

AND IF HE STILL HAD THE STRENGTH AND INCLINATION...NOT TO MENTION THE **COURAGE**...TO STEP **THROUGH** THAT **DOOR** WHEN HE WAS **DONE**, HE WOULDN'T REALLY **FIND** MUCH...!



MERELY A **PIT**, LIT BY MUTED **PHOSPHORESCENCE** FROM SOMEWHERE FAR **BELOW**!

IT'S AT THE **BOTTOM** OF THE PIT,
DOWN A LONG, CORRODED LADDER
SET PRECARIOUSLY INTO ITS SIDE,
THAT THINGS FINALLY BEGIN TO
GET **INTERESTING...**

BECAUSE IT'S **THERE** THAT YOU'LL
FIND THE **PEOPLE!**

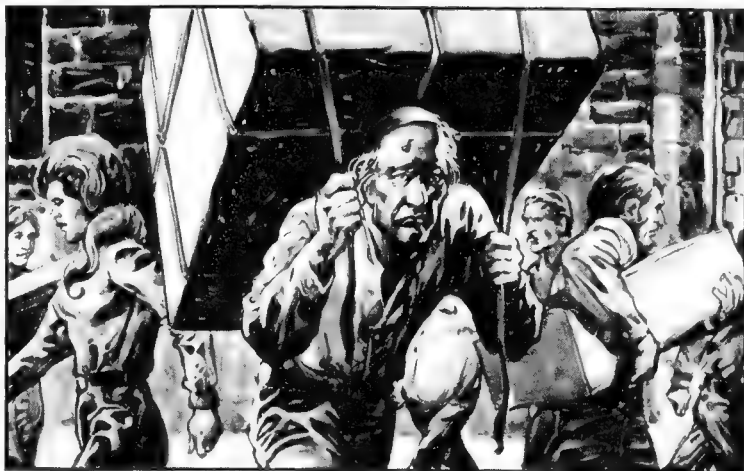


YEAH...! THE **PEOPLE!** I
KNEW THIS SO-CALLED STORY
WAS MISSING **SOMETHING!**
QUESTION **NOW** IS... WHAT TO
DO WITH THEM!

WELL, LET'S TRY **THIS...**!

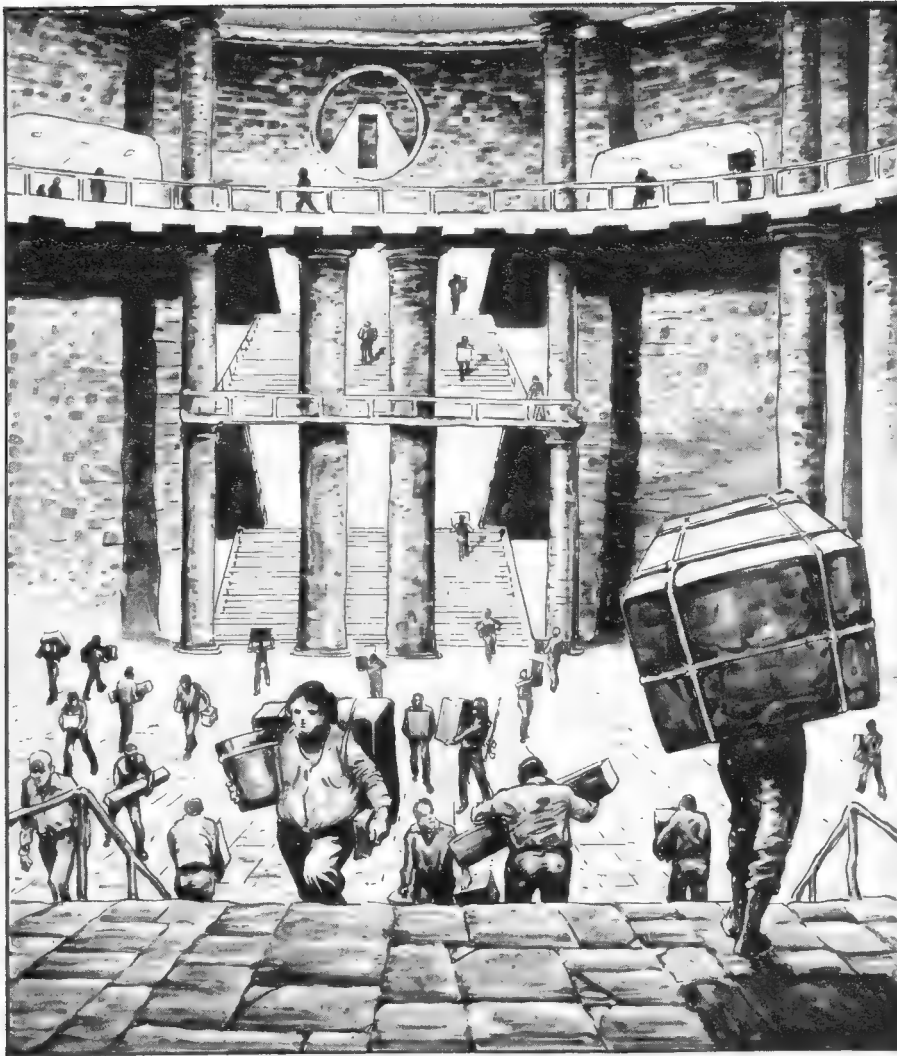
THE PEOPLE STUMBLE
THROUGH THE WIND-
ING CORRIDORS BE-
NEATH THE BLACK
TOWER LIKE **ANTS...**

...SCURRYING HERE
AND THERE WITH
HEAVY BURDENS ON
THEIR BACKS, ALWAYS
WORKING, ALWAYS
BUSY, NEVER
KNOWING **REST...**!



WHAT THEY
DO KNOW IS
FEAR...!
GUT-LEVEL,
OVERWHELM-
ING FEAR!

THE KIND THAT
INTIMIDATES
YOU...**BREAKS**
YOU...SO THAT
YOU'D RATHER
DO NOTHING
THAN TO RISK
DOING ANY-
THING **WRONG!**



YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND. YOU CAN'T REALLY **BLAME** THE PEOPLE FOR THEIR FEARS! AFTER ALL, THEY SERVE **THE BOX!** AND THE BOX IS A **DEMANDING** MASTER!

YES... **THE BOX!** IT'S ABOUT TIME WE **TALKED** ABOUT **THE BOX!** PROBABLY SHOULD'VE DONE IT BACK AT THE BEGINNING! DON'T KNOW HOW GUYS LIKE **AESOP** EVER MANAGED TO MAKE A LIVING AT THIS!

THE **FUNNY** THING IS, THE BOX HAD REALLY SEEMED LIKE A **GOOD IDEA** AT THE TIME! THE MEN WHO **IN-VENTED** IT THOUGHT THEY WERE DOING THEIR WORLD A GREAT **SERVICE!**

HERE, AT LAST, WAS THE PERFECT **LEARNING TOOL** ...THE ULTIMATE MEANS OF **COMMUNICATION!**

THEY THOUGHT THE BOX WOULD SERVE THEIR PEOPLE **SELF-LESSLY**, UNHESITANTLY...! BUT IT WASN'T VERY LONG BEFORE **THEY** WERE SERVING **IT!**

JUST HOW **WELL** EACH PERSON SERVED THE BOX COULD BE DETERMINED BY THE SIZE OF THE BURDEN THAT HE CARRIED! THE BURDEN OF THOSE GOING **UP** THE STAIRS, FOR INSTANCE, WAS MUCH GREATER THAN THE BURDEN CARRIED BY THOSE COMING **DOWN!**

AND **THAT**, IN TURN, WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ONLY **OTHER** EMOTION THESE PEOPLE EVER FELT: PURE, UNADULTERATED **JEALOUSY!**





LOOK, I KNOW **FEAR**, AND **JEALOUSY** AREN'T EXACTLY THE TWO MOST APPEALING EMOTIONS TO TALK ABOUT. BUT THERE ISN'T VERY MUCH I CAN **DO** ABOUT THAT!

I'M JUST TELLING THIS STORY LIKE IT **IS**, TO COIN A CLICHE. AND THE WAY IT IS IN THIS NAMELESS, GOD-FORESAKEN WORLD IS...**LOUSY!**



IN THIS SOCIETY OF THE PEOPLE WHO SERVE THE **BOX**, THE BURDEN ONE CARRIES IS **EVERYTHING...**

...AND GOD **HELP** YOU IF YOU SHOULD EVER **FALTER** IN YOUR **DUTY!**

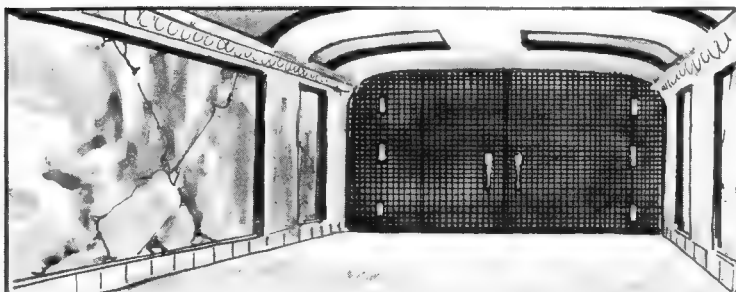


YOU SEE, IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER HOW **WELL** YOU SERVED THE BOX IN THE PAST...HOW MUCH YOU'VE **FED** IT AND **NUTURED** IT...HOW MUCH YOU'VE **CONTRIBUTED** TO ITS **RELENTLESS GROWTH...**

THE BOX ONLY WANTS TO KNOW WHAT YOU'VE DONE FOR IT **LATELY...** AND THOSE WHO CAN'T **CARRY** THEIR FAIR SHARE OF THE **LOAD...**

...WELL, LET'S JUST SAY THAT THEY'RE **EXPENDABLE!**





OKAY, THAT COVERS THE **SETTING**...THE **CHARACTERS**...A LITTLE **DRAMA**... A LITTLE **PATHOS**...! IS THERE ANYTHING I **MISS**ED?

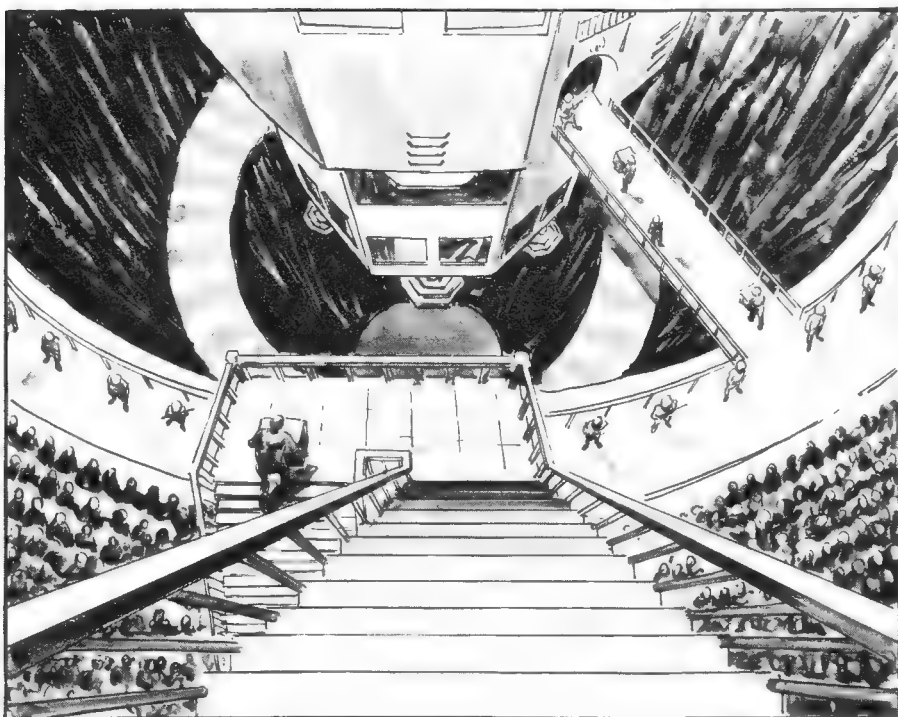
OH, YEAH...A **PLOT**! THAT'S GOING TO BE A LITTLE **TOUGHER**. BUT HELL, I'VE GOTTEN **THIS** FAR!

GUESS IT'S TIME TO TALK ABOUT THE **ROOM** AT THE END OF THE **TUNNEL**!



IT ISN'T EVERYONE IN THE SOCIETY OF THE BOX WHO IS PRIVILEGED TO **ENTER** THIS ROOM. THERE ARE THOSE IN FACT, WHO SPEND THEIR ENTIRE LIVES WITHOUT EVER KNOWING OF ITS **EXISTENCE**...!

THOSE WHO ARE **PERMITTED** TO ENTER, DO SO WITH THE GREATEST **REVERENCE** AND **FEALTY**.

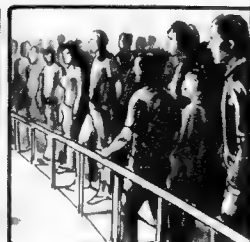


FOR **THIS** ROOM IS THE VERY **TEMPLE** OF THE **BOX** ITSELF!

IT IS **HERE** IN THE SPRAWLING ARENA WHICH **SURROUNDS** THE **BOX**, THAT THE PRIVILEGED HAVE COME TO **WORSHIP**...TO SIT **TRANSFIXED** FOR HOURS ON END BEFORE THE AWESOME MECHANISM WHICH HAS BE-COME THEIR **GOD**! THEY COME TO WITNESS THE BOX'S LATEST **REVELATIONS**...!

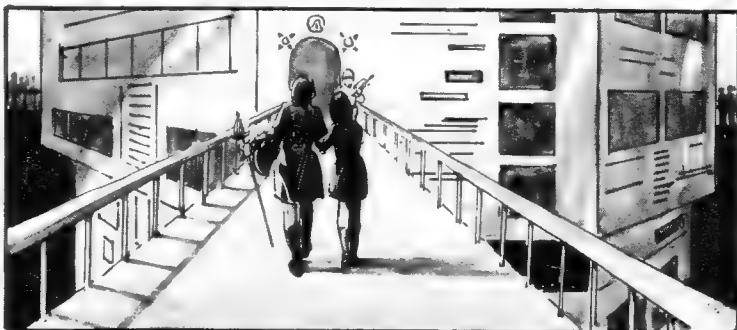
THAT IS, UNTIL THEY **HAVE**... COME **TODAY**.

YOU SEE, LIKE **ANY GOD**, THE BOX HAS STARTED TO BECOME A **VICTIM** OF ITS OWN **OMNIPOTENCE**! IT HAS BEEN THE CENTRAL FOCUS OF ITS PEOPLE'S LIVES FOR SO LONG THAT THEY HAVE BEGUN TO **USE UP** THEIR REVERENCE...THEIR **BE-LIEF**!



THE MORE THE BOX **GIVES** ITS PEOPLE, THE MORE THEY **REQUIRE**. AND THE MORE THE BOX PRODUCES TO **FULFILL** THAT NEED, THE **SHODDIER** ITS ULTIMATE **QUALITY**!

IT'S WHAT'S CALLED THE LAW OF **DIMINISHING RETURNS**!



SLOWLY, BUT SURELY, THE ONCE-FAITHFUL ARE GROWING **BORED** WITH THE BOX. AND THE BOX, IN TURN, IS GROWING **DESPERATE**!

AND THAT IS WHY **TODAY** THE BOX IS APPLYING EVERYTHING IT KNOWS TO A SINGLE LAST-DITCH EFFORT TO **SATISFY** ITS VORACIOUS **SUBJECTS**!

THE BOX IS ADDING ALL THE BASIC **INGREDIENTS** TO THE EQUATION OF ITS SURVIVAL: A HEROIC **MAN**...A BEAUTIFUL **WOMAN**...THE HOPES OF A HUNGRY **WORLD**...AND THE **PROMISE** OF LIFE EVERLASTING...!



WITH A RUMBLING HUSH, THE DOOR IS **SEALED**...THE TEMPLE OF THE BOX **ACTIVATED**.

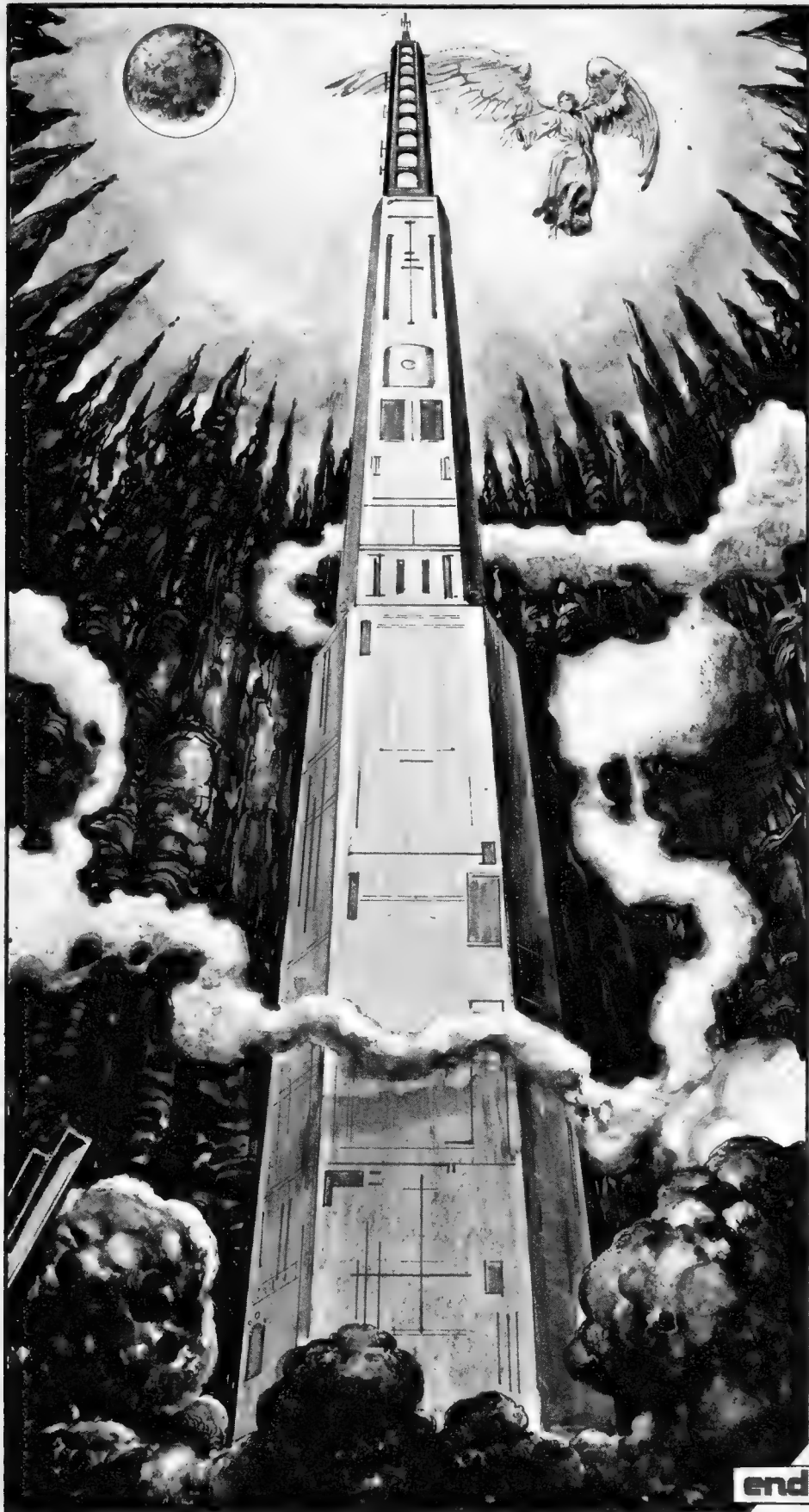


THE FAITHFUL CLASP THEIR HANDS IN FERVENT **PRAYER**, HOPING AGAINST HOPE THAT **THIS** REVELATION WILL PROVE **MORE** THAN THE SUM OF ITS **PARTS**...

...THAT IT WILL CONTAIN SOME NEW **TRUTH** THAT WILL GIVE THEM THE STRENGTH TO **CONTINUE** THEIR WORSHIP.



BUT, ALAS... THAT IS **NOT** TO BE!



THE REVELATION IS
**TESTED...AND FOUND
WANTING...!**

AND THE **DISAPPOINT-
MENT** CAN BE FELT
ACROSS THE LENGTH
AND BREADTH OF THE
WORLD AS AN ALMOST
TANGIBLE THING!

WITH A LOW, MOANING
SIGH, THE SOCIETY OF
THE PEOPLE WHO WOR-
SHIP THE BOX, **DIES...**
OF A COLLECTIVE
BROKEN HEART!

IT IS THE FIRST TIME
IN RECORDED HISTORY
THAT AN ENTIRE
CIVILIZATION WAS
EVER **CANCELLED**
BECAUSE OF **LOW
RATINGS!**

AND THAT'S **IT!** THAT'S
ALL I HAVE TO **TELL
YOU!** I SUPPOSE
THERE'S A **MORAL** TO
THIS STORY IN THERE
SOMEWHERE!

BUT I'LL BE DAMNED
IF I CAN FIND IT!

end

CALL IT FUTURE SEX FANTASIES?

I've just received the latest issue of 1984, and after reading it, felt both ripped off and insulted. I believe you should retile this magazine "Stagnant Illustrated Sleazy Porn." It certainly would give the buyer a better idea of what your magazine contains.

Don't think I'm speaking out against adult comics. I highly enjoy both **Richard Corben's** and **Nicola Cuti's** stories. However, not even these two excellent authors can make up for the rest of the pap served up to us in 1984.

Every single story written by **Bill DuBay** contains cutesy-pie language and trashy slang, neither of which is funny or in the least bit a turn-on.

It enraged me when **Mr. DuBay** had the audacity to script into two separate stories that when a woman is gang-raped or has her insides blown to smithereens while being sexually assaulted, that she dies in ecstasy, or at the very least, contentment. What kind of bullshit is that?

Any woman or doctor can tell you that rape is extremely painful and that gang-banging is definitely no fun. This sort of irresponsible writing can only do irreversible damage towards the attitudes of your impressionable younger readers.

I have always thought that this sort of rape fantasy was attractive only to physically or mentally weak men who get their kicks out of pushing women around. So isn't 1984 catering to a very small minority?

Also, what is it with the bold lettering emphasis on all of the dirty words, or words that can be misconstrued as a coy reference to sex? I feel like I'm reading a book that has been gone over by some old lady with a red pen underlining all of the "filth."

I don't really object to the words themselves, but then neither do I need them blaring out at me every time I turn a page. Then again, maybe this style of lettering is for those who like to take a quick skim and then jerk off on the remembrances. How considerate of you.

J. HUNT
Glen Mills, Pa.

Why not simply call 1984 "Bill DuBay's Future Sex Fantasies?" Why does adult fantasy always have to mean male oriented sex dreams? Couldn't it for once mean intelligent, perceptive and imaginative fiction?

I've waited years for **Warren Publishing** to come out with a science fiction magazine, only to discover that science fiction is taking a back seat to **DuBay's** infatuation with sex.

LEE WIDENER
Eugene, Oregon



I want to make one thing perfectly clear: I don't disgust easily. I admire **Robert Crumb** and **Robert Williams**, although **S. Clay Wilson** strikes me as tedious. But I can say without reservation that the first several issues of 1984 are among the most disgusting things I have ever seen. They give Nazi war atrocities a run for their money.

No doubt you've received hundreds of letters like this and have dismissed the writers as prudes. But I am prepared to make my case against the magazine and the major culprit: **Bill DuBay**. To summarize, 1984 is adolescent, misogynist, anti-sexual, hypocritical, small-minded, unimaginative and just plain stupid.

To be specific:

Misogynist: to editor/author **DuBay**, there are two kinds of women: castrating bitches who are all hags, and dumb nymphs who are all prostitutes. It is never even hinted that women might be human beings with lives of their own, apart from the role they play in the direct gratification of men. As for those who do dedicate themselves to said gratification, not only does **DuBay** have no respect for them (they're all tramps anyway), he doesn't even like them very much.

Anti-sexual: It's obvious from **DuBay's** hatred of women that he wouldn't be involved with sexual intercourse at all if his right hand satisfied him. I can find only one story in 1984 in which sexual intercourse is even portrayed as pleasurable; God forbid that love be mentioned anywhere.

Adolescent: The fear of sex and the fear of women are basic traumatic-adolescent neuroses. One could also point to **DuBay's** obsession with penis size as the primary (in fact, the only) factor in sexual relationships. In each issue he has had stories in which men with large penises must battle men with small penises for control of women (who have no say in the matter, dumb nymphs that they are).

But **DuBay** outdoes himself in "Scourge of the Spaceways" in issue #2. It's his **Triumph of the Will**. It has everything: Hatred of women taken to psychotic depths (denying them even the right to exist), an archaic, chauvinistic stance, and an obvious demonstration of repressed homosexuality (along with the repressed homosexual's natural hatred for honest homosexuals). Further, castration, not an unusual topic for 1984, has been a major factor in half a dozen stories. Someone ought to call Guinness. And last but not least, he has presented us with an ample dose of that hoariest of old Freudian bugaboos: vagina dentata! For Christ's sake!

Small-minded, etc: **DuBay** sees the world as a small island of "us," meaning, for the most part, white Anglo Saxon males, preferably with large penises, surrounded by the vile enemy: Russians, Chinese, politicians, and those with more intelligence than **DuBay**.

In two stories he has had the uncivilized, destroyed planet turn out to be Earth, a plot gimmick that wouldn't get out of the slush pile of the cheapest science fiction magazine.

The only thing that halfway saves 1984 magazine is **Richard Corben's** artistic presence, and I hope **DuBay** never gets his hot little typewriter on that.

Under normal conditions I would simply suggest that you give your editor a pile of old **Heavy Metal** magazines to show him how a real adult magazine should be written. It is my feeling that **DuBay** should be dumped immediately. It is a crime to allow this hopeless neurotic's over-worded ramblings to ruin the consistently excellent artwork in 1984.

R. FIORE
No address

Bill DuBay has one hell of a death wish, doesn't he? In the first three issues of 1984 he has managed to author at least one story per issue with enough controversial punch to get himself killed.

Take a look at "Last of the Really Great All-American Joy Juice" in issue #1. Have you ever seen such profanity in your life? Certainly not in a funny book. I can just see the followers of the Right Reverend **Billy Graham** now, crucifying **Mr. DuBay** for trouncing so vehemently on the second commandment with his fervent, almost fanatical abuse of the English language.

And then there's issue #2's "Scourge of the Spaceways," wherein the entire female population of the world is maligned and slandered. If **DuBay** isn't on **Gloria Steinam's** shit list after that, I don't know who is.

And will the world ever be the same after "The Harvest" in issue #3? Certainly race relations between blacks and the rest of the world will hit an all-time low. All I can say is that I hope **Mr. DuBay** doesn't have to go through Harlem on his way to the **Warren** offices.

What is your erstwhile editor trying to prove? That he can break new ground and exceed the already nonexistent limits of good taste within the comics media? Is this his one man crusade to alienate, one by one, every conceivable interest group within the vast boundaries of **Warren's** distribution system? Or is the man truly out of his gourd and just waiting for that lone fanatic who will obligingly make him comicdom's first martyr?

J.F. HINDERSON
Stevens, Texas

The next time your excitable editor gets the urge to write and print the same kind of sleazy crap he has inundated us with in the first four issues of 1984, you can tell him to roll up his manuscripts and stick them where the sun don't shine!

CINDY BRANDT
Saybrook, Ill.

If **Jim Warren** wants to publish a for-real "adult" science fiction comic, then maybe his excitable editor needs to grow up just a little bit first.

An adult comic magazine should be more than random storylines revolving around sexual goings-on. Further, the magazine's "adult" dialogue leaves much to be desired. I rather doubt that 1984's juvenile profanity will jump up and set the world afire as editor **Bill DuBay** so obviously hopes.

H. HOLLUB
Northport, Ala.

Letters continued on page 68



PROLOGUE

A LITTLE TOO SLOW AND A LITTLE TOO CAUTIOUS, THE OCTIPEDE POKED HIS NASAL ASSEMBLY INTO THE DARKENED AISLE, DELIGHTING IN A SUDDEN BLAST OF SCENT FROM HIS OPPONENT. ZOCO, HE KNEW, WAS SOMEWHERE IN THE BUILDING, AND IN ANOTHER MOMENT, HE WOULD HAVE HIM **PINPOINTED**.



ZOCO THINKS TO CONFUSE MY NOSE BY HIDING IN A SUPERMARKET! HO HO SNARK SNARK! ZOCO FORGETS THE RANGE OF MY ABILITIES AND THE STRENGTH OF HIS OWN SMELL!

GG'DINN! LOOK BEHIND YOU!

AND WHEN ZOCO IS DEAD, I WILL BECOME KILLMAN ONE!

TO GG'DINN'S FINAL ASTONISHMENT, THERE WAS ZOCO, DRENCHED IN **BATHROOM DEODORANT** AND SMELLING LIKE FLOWERS. THE OCTIPEDE HAD MISTAKEN HIS SMELL FOR THAT OF A GARDEN DISPLAY.

A STUPID ERROR...ONE WHICH ZOCO DID NOT GIVE THE OCTIPEDE TIME TO REGRET.



YOU'RE THINKIN' TOO LOUD, AIR-HEAD!

I HEARD YOU DREAMIN' ALL THE WAY OVER IN PRODUCE!



LET THIS BE A LESSON TO YOU, GG'DINN... PARTICULARLY IF YOU WANT TO BECOME A KILLMAN IN YOUR NEXT LIFE....!

HALFWAY AROUND THE WORLD, ZOCO'S MATE, FRING, WAS HITTING THE BOTTLE EVEN MORE VENGEFULLY THAN USUAL.



ZOCO APPRECIATED FRING'S DRINKING. HE THOUGHT IT TO BE (ALONG WITH HER PERFECT 36-36-36-24-36 MEASUREMENTS) ONE OF HER BIG ASSETS. ALSO, IT GAVE HER SOMETHING TO DO WHILE HE WAS AWAY ON CHALLENGES.

IT WAS AN ODD, SHALLOW RELATIONSHIP, TO BE SURE. AS WITH ALL THE WOMEN IN ZOCO'S LIFE, FRING HAD BECOME ENSNARED IN HIS WEB OF PROMISES AND SWEET LIES, ONLY TO BE ABUSED AND BATTERED, OR NEGLECTED FOR WEEKS AT A TIME, AS WAS ZOCO'S HABIT.



THE OTHER WOMEN WALKED, AND SO SHOULD HAVE FRING. BUT BY THE TIME SHE DISCOVERED ZOCO FOR THE LOW, INSENSITIVE BASTARD HE WAS, SHE WAS ALREADY CAUGHT. SHE HAD MARRIED THE MAN.



FOR THE THREE YEARS FRING ENDURED ZOCO, HE HAD BECOME HER **PERSONAL TORMENTOR**. DIVORCE WAS IMPOSSIBLE; ZOCO'S PRIDE WOULD NEVER AGREE TO IT. HER MENTAL CONDITION BECAME EPISODES OF BLACKER AND DEEPER DEPRESSION, SPIRALING IRRETRIEVABLY, UNTIL AT LAST...

...SHE WAS DRIVEN TO THE ONLY DESPERATE SOLUTION TO HER INSOLVABLE PROBLEM.

WHEN THE **FIVE THOUSAND-YEAR OLD STELLAR WAR** FINALLY ENDED, IT WAS THE PEOPLE OF N'GGS D'NING WHO TRIED TO GET IT **STARTED** AGAIN. NEVER MIND THAT THAT PLANET WAS NEVER INVOLVED IN THE CONFLICT! THE WAR WAS SUCH A **BLAST**, SO **TERRIFICALLY SUPER-SPECTACULAR**, THAT N'GGS D'NING TORQUED UP FOR MORE.

WHEN THAT DIDN'T WORK OUT, THEY CREATED THE **KILLGAME**, AND THAT WENT LIKE THIS: TWO OPPONENTS TRIED TO KILL EACH OTHER TILL ONE OF THEM WAS DEAD. IT HAD SWASH AND DANGER AND NOT A LITTLE BLOOD, AND **BETS** WERE MADE ON THE OUTCOME. IT WAS AWFULLY POPULAR, AND IN NO TIME ALL THE OTHER PLANETS OF THE SYSTEM ENLISTED IN IT. AS ONE N'GGS D'NING-IAN PUT IT: "WELL, IT AIN'T WAR, BUT IT'LL DO UNTIL WE CAN **FIND** ONE."

THE MEN WHO KILLED FOR SPORT WERE CALLED **KILLMEN**, AND THE GREATEST OF THE KILLMEN WAS **ZOCO**, WHO HAD FORTY-NINE RUBOUTS TO HIS CREDIT. AND THOUGH THERE WAS A KILLMAN TWO, THREE, FOUR, AND 50 ON, NO ONE SERIOUSLY APPROACHED THE MAN.

KILLMAN ONE





FRING, MY LITTLE COW...! WHAT'S THIS SHIT I HEAR ABOUT YOU TRYIN' TO KILL YOURSELF? WHERE THE FUCK ARE YOUR BRAINS, GIRL?

I BEGGED YOU FOR A DIVORCE, ZOCO. BUT YOU WOULDN'T GIVE IT TO ME. I DIDN'T KNOW HOW ELSE TO BE FREE OF YOU.

YOU'RE A BEAST, ZOCO, AND I DON'T CARE WHO HEARS IT! THE ONLY RELATIONSHIP YOU HAVE WITH ANYONE IS AS AN OPPONENT! BUT I WON'T BE TORTURED BY YOU ANY LONGER! I'VE HAD IT!



YOU'RE CRAZY, FRING! THE DOCTOR TOLD ME THEY'D BE HOLDING YOU FOR PSYCHE-TESTS. YOU'RE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ANYTHING YOU SAY OR DO!

NO! YOU CAN'T CONVINCE ME OF THAT! I WON'T LISTEN TO YOU!



HELPLESS... FRAGILE... SCATTER-BRAINED. YOU CAN'T EVEN KILL YOURSELF WITHOUT SOMEONE TO SHOW YOU HOW!

ZOCO! WHAT ARE YOU DOING? STOP IT!! YOU... YOU CAN'T DO THAT HERE!

ALL RIGHT! HAVE IT YOUR WAY! BUT YOU KNOW WHAT I'M GOING TO DO FOR YOU...JUST TO SHOW I FORGIVE YOU? AS SOON AS THE DOCTORS SAY IT'S OKAY, WE'RE GOING ON THAT HONEYMOON I'VE BEEN PROMISING FOR THE LAST THREE YEARS!



JUST THE TWO OF US... ALONE IN THE MOUNTAINS. HOW'S THAT SOUND?

NO... SOB!...MY LORD, NO...!



I HAVE TO LEAVE NOW, BUT AS SOON AS I GET BACK FROM THE KILLMAN CONVENTION, WE'RE OFF! G'BYE, LITTLE COW! GET WELL SOON!

SOB! WILL... NOBODY HELP ME? BOO HOO HOO!



IF I MAY BE SO BOLD, FRING...! I'D SAY ZOCO'S THE ONE WHO NEEDS PSYCHIATRIC CARE! HE'S A LOUSE!

SO HELP ME, IF I HAD MY SERVICE REVOLVER, I'D CHALLENGE THE BIG BLOWHARD MYSELF!

ER...BUT I DON'T HAVE IT. IT'S AT MY MOTHER'S HOUSE!

OH, DOCTOR! ZOCO SCARES EVERYBODY THE SAME WAY. BECAUSE OF HIM, CHIVALRY IS DEAD!

NO...IF I'M EVER TO ESCAPE ZOCO, I HAVE TO DO IT ON MY OWN. AND I DON'T MEAN SUICIDE!

THAT NIGHT, WITHOUT PERMISSION, FRING WALKED OUT OF THE HOSPITAL. BUT THE FRING WHO SNATCHED A NURSE'S CIVILIAN CLOTHES, PUT THEM ON, AND CALMLY WHISTLED PAST SECURITY WAS NOT THE SAME FRING WHO HAD BEEN BROUGHT INTO THE PLACE ON A STRETCHER JUST THE DAY BEFORE.

THIS WAS A NEW FRING. A STRONG FRING. A WOMAN OF DETERMINATION!



I KNOW THESE KILLMAN CONVENTIONS: GAMBLING, SEX, AND UNADULTERATED BULLSHIT. ZOZO WILL BE GONE FOR TWO OR THREE WEEKS AT LEAST. NOT NEARLY ENOUGH TIME TO PREPARE... BUT IT WILL HAVE TO DO.

FORTUNATELY, ZOZO LEFT SOME CASH AND BANK BOOKS. I'LL TAKE THEM ALL...! HOWEVER THIS THING WORKS OUT, I WON'T BE RETURNING HERE AGAIN.

BACK AT THE APARTMENT, FRING CONSIDERED HER PLAN...!



THE FOLLOWING DAY, FRING PRESENTED HERSELF AT THE BROKEN TREATY RIFLE PRACTICE AND LIMITED WARFARE RANGE.



ALL RIGHT! I
GET THE PICTURE! YOU
DON'T WANT ME TO PRAC-
TICE MY MARKSMANSHIP
HERE, IS THAT IT?

WELL, IT SO
HAPPENS THERE
ARE ANY NUMBER
OF OTHER PRACTICE
RANGES WHO'D BEG
TO HAVE ME!

THE DUST WAS STILL SETTLING IN HALF A DOZEN MORE
RANGES WHEN FRING, ON THREAT OF **ARREST**, DECIDED TO
TAKE HER RIFLE-PRACTICE TO A CABIN OUTSIDE THE CITY. AS
THE DAYS PASSED, THE RESULTS BECAME NO MORE ENCOUR-
AGING.

ONLY TWO MORE
DAYS TO QUALIFY FOR
THE NEXT SERIES OF KILL-
GAMES, AND I'M STILL
NOWHERE GOOD ENOUGH!

THIS NEW
MARKFINDER COM-
PUTERIZED RIFLE IS
MY LAST CHANCE. THE
SALESMAN SAID THAT
EVEN THE WORST
SHOOTER CAN'T MISS
WITH THIS GUN.

WELL,
THE MARK-
FINDER COMPANY
HAS NEVER HAD
ME TO DEAL
WITH...

YAHOO! ALL
THREE CANS DEAD
CENTER! I LOVE YOU,
MR. MARKFINDER!

NEXT
STOP...
THE
KILLGAME!

ZOCO RETURNED FROM THE KILLMAN CONVENTION
SOONER THAN HE ANTICIPATED. A CHECK HE'D
WRITTEN **BOUNCED**.

WHAT THE
BLUE BALLS IS
GOING ON HERE?!
FRING HASN'T BEEN
HOME SINCE I LEFT,
EXCEPT TO TAKE
ALL MY MONEY!

WHEN I
FIND HER, SHE'LL
PAY FOR THIS!

**KNOCK!
KNOCK!
KNOCK!**

ADDRESSED
TO YOU, MR. ZOCO...
URGENT FROM KILLGAME
CENTRAL!

ROSES ARE RED,
PEAS IN A POD,
GET OUT OF THE
BUSINESS, ZOCO
YOU'VE SHOT YOUR
WAD!
SINCERELY,
YOUR CHALLENGER,
FRING!

FRING!?
MY WIFE?!
YOU TRYIN' TO
JERK ME OFF,
BOY!?

UH...
UH...ER...
NO, M-MISTER
ZOCO, SIR...!
I-IT'S...
AUTHENTIC!

**BUT
SHE'S A
WOMAN!!**

NOTHING IN
THE REGS ABOUT IT,
ZOCO! AND THAT INCLUDES
SPOUSES! JUST BECAUSE
A WOMAN HAS NEVER
ENTERED THE KILLGAME
BEFORE, DOESN'T MEAN
SHE CAN'T. PERSONALLY,
I THINK IT'S KINDA
COMICAL!

THAT'S DAWN
TOMORROW... WAR
ZONE 22. UNLESS YOU
WANT TO **DECLINE**
THE CHALLENGE!!

**DECLINE!?!
I'LL KNOCK HER
BLOCK OFF!!**

WAR ZONE 22. A FEW VACANT ADOBES ON THE EDGE OF THE PLAINLANDS. NOBODY LIVED IN THE WAR ZONE; IT WAS AN ARENA ARRANGED FOR OPTIMUM VIEWING OF THE COMBATANTS BY A STELLAR-WIDE TV AUDIENCE. THE BETTING WINDOWS BUSTLED AS ZOCO PREPARED FOR HIS FIFTIETH KILL.

IT WAS DAWN, AND WITHIN ONE OF THE BUILDINGS BEFORE HIM, ZOCO'S MATE WAITED TO MURDER HIM.

THIS IS HUMILIATING. A KILLMAN OF MY RANK REDUCED TO STALKING A SQUAW.

MAYBE IT'S FOR THE BEST! SHE'S BEEN GETTING AWFULLY UPPITY LATELY. TIME TO TURN HER IN FOR A NEW MODEL.

FRING! IF YOU CAN HEAR ME, YOU CAN STILL FORFEIT THE GAME! AS LONG AS THE FIRST SHOT ISN'T FIRED, YOU CAN STILL BACK OUT!

TAKE MY ADVICE, FRING... GIVE IT UP! RUN AWAY! DON'T GIVE ME A CHANCE TO FIND YOU!

BECAUSE... AND MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT, LOVE... IF I FIND YOU, I'LL BLOW YOUR SWEET ASS AWAY!

WHAT'S THE MATTER, FRING? WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN ABLE TO WORK OUT OUR PROBLEMS BEFORE! WHY DO YOU BRING OUR TRIVIAL QUARREL INTO A WAR ZONE?

IS IT CHILDREN YOU WANT? WOULD THAT MAKE YOU HAPPY, FRING?

HOW ABOUT SOME NEW CLOTHES? COME ON OUT, DAMN IT...! YOU'RE MAKING ME ANGRY!

OKAY, LITTLE COW...! I GAVE YOU EVERY CHANCE! IT'S YOU OR ME NOW, BABE! THIS IS THE KISSOFF!

AND AFTER I GAVE YOU THE BEST WEEKENDS OF MY LIFE...!

SO THERE YOU ARE!

HOW VERY GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, MY DEAR.

YIPE! I MISSED HIM! BUT HOW?

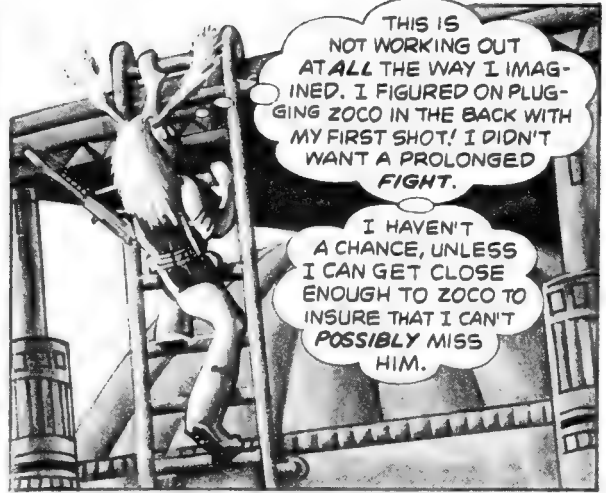
AH! YOU HAVE A MARKFINDER! IT'S A GOOD CHOICE, GIRL...! BUT ALMOST USELESS WHEN THE BATTERIES RUN LOW!

OR DIDN'T YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT? HOHO HAAAA!



OH, I'M
REALLY GOING TO
ENJOY THIS! MY OPPON-
ENT IS NOT ONLY *INEXPER-*
ENCED, BUT A *DIPPY*
DAME, TOO!

HOHOHOHO!
THIS WILL BE
THE *EASIEST*
DOUGH I EVER
MADE!



THIS IS
NOT WORKING OUT
AT *ALL* THE WAY I IMAG-
INED. I FIGURED ON PLUG-
GING ZOCO IN THE BACK WITH
MY FIRST SHOT! I DIDN'T
WANT A PROLONGED
FIGHT.

I HAVEN'T
A CHANCE, UNLESS
I CAN GET CLOSE
ENOUGH TO ZOCO TO
INSURE THAT I CAN'T
POSSIBLY MISS
HIM.



WHAT?
HE'S STOPPED
FIRING! WHAT CAN
HE BE UP TO?



VANISHED.
NO SIGN OF ZOCO
ANYWHERE. HE...
HE'S *TAUNTING* ME
...I JUST KNOW
IT!

SHIT!
I'M TIGHTENING
UP! THAT SON OF A
BITCH HAS ME
TERRORIZED
AGAIN!

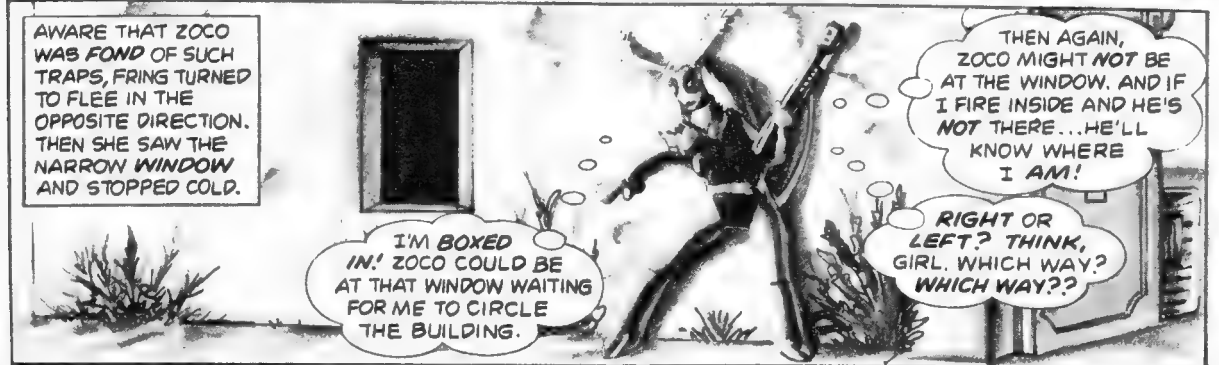


THERE!
ZOCO'S BOOT! HE'S
WAITING AROUND
THE CORNER!

I'LL
CIRCLE THE
BUILDING AND COME
UP BEHIND! WAIT A
MINUTE! SOMETHING'S
NOT RIGHT...!

IT COULD
BE A *TRAP*! IT
COULD BE JUST HIS
EMPTY BOOT
SITTING THERE!

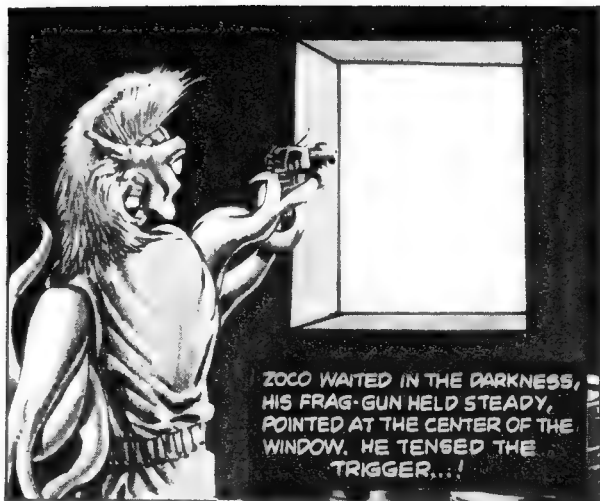
AWARE THAT ZOCO
WAS *FOND* OF SUCH
TRAPS, FRING TURNED
TO FLEE IN THE
OPPOSITE DIRECTION.
THEN SHE SAW THE
NARROW *WINDOW*
AND STOPPED COLD.



I'M *BOXED*
IN! ZOCO COULD BE
AT THAT WINDOW WAITING
FOR ME TO *CIRCLE*
THE BUILDING.

THEN AGAIN,
ZOCO MIGHT *NOT* BE
AT THE WINDOW. AND IF
I FIRE INSIDE AND HE'S
NOT THERE...HE'LL
KNOW WHERE
I AM!

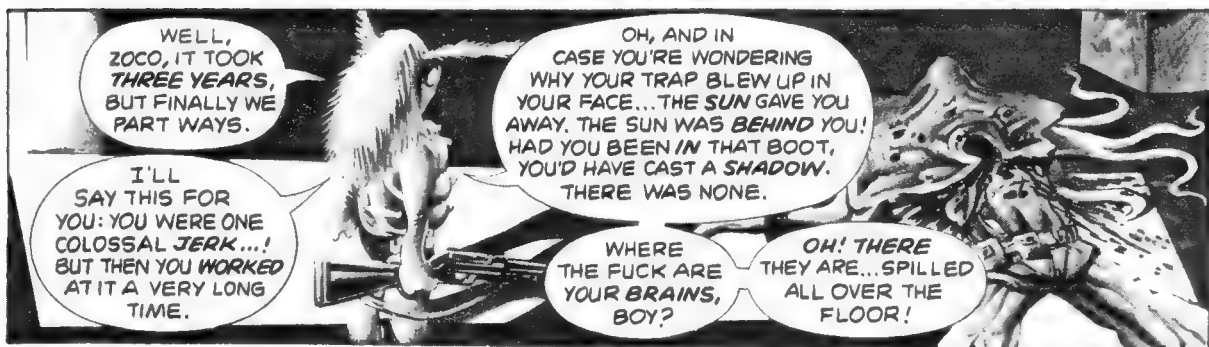
RIGHT OR
LEFT? THINK,
GIRL. WHICH WAY?
WHICH WAY??



ZOCO WAITED IN THE DARKNESS, HIS FRAG-GUN HELD STEADY, POINTED AT THE CENTER OF THE WINDOW. HE TENSED THE TRIGGER...



CAUGHT BETWEEN THE ROCK AND THE HARD PLACE, FRING WAS WELL-AWARE THAT **EVERYTHING** WEIGHED ON HER NEXT DECISION. SUDDENLY, SHE HAD THE **ANSWER**...



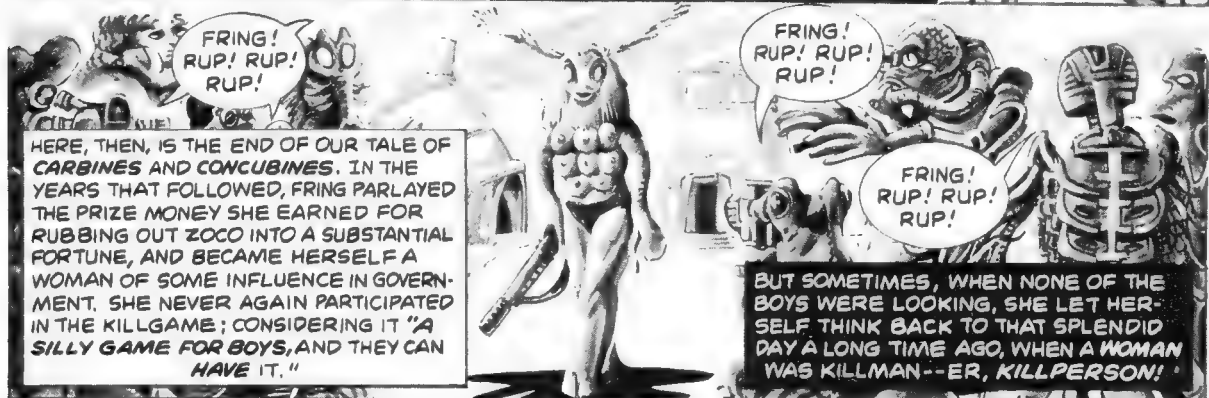
WELL, ZOCO, IT TOOK **THREE YEARS**, BUT FINALLY WE PART WAYS.

I'LL SAY THIS FOR YOU: YOU WERE ONE COLOSSAL **JERK**...! BUT THEN YOU **WORKED** AT IT A VERY LONG TIME.

OH, AND IN CASE YOU'RE WONDERING WHY YOUR TRAP BLEW UP IN YOUR FACE... THE **SUN** GAVE YOU AWAY. THE **SUN** WAS **BEHIND** YOU! HAD YOU BEEN **IN** THAT **BOOT**, YOU'D HAVE CAST A **SHADOW**. THERE WAS **NONE**.

WHERE THE **FUCK** ARE YOUR **BRAINS**, **BOY**?

OH! THERE THEY ARE... **SPILLED** ALL OVER THE **FLOOR**!



FRING! RUP! RUP! RUP!

HERE, THEN, IS THE END OF OUR TALE OF **CARBINES** AND **CONCUBINES**. IN THE YEARS THAT FOLLOWED, FRING PARLAYED THE PRIZE MONEY SHE EARNED FOR RUBBING OUT ZOCO INTO A SUBSTANTIAL FORTUNE, AND BECAME HERSELF A WOMAN OF SOME INFLUENCE IN GOVERNMENT. SHE NEVER AGAIN PARTICIPATED IN THE KILLGAME; CONSIDERING IT "A **SILLY GAME** FOR **BOYS**, AND THEY CAN **HAVE** IT."

FRING! RUP! RUP! RUP!

FRING! RUP! RUP! RUP!

BUT SOMETIMES, WHEN NONE OF THE **BOYS** WERE LOOKING, SHE LET HERSELF THINK BACK TO THAT **SPLendid** DAY A LONG TIME AGO, WHEN A **WOMAN** WAS **KILLMAN**--ER, **KILLPERSON**!



"IDI NOT LIKE YOU MAKE FUN FROM HIM!"

Your new magazine is inventive, beautifully illustrated and not without an appropriate share of wit and humor. In particular I refer to "Whatever Happened to Idi Amin." To me this seems a clever satire on the typical and somewhat cliché boy-meets-girl odes so often seen in other Warren magazines.

Not that those stories aren't good. They are just so predictable and appear with such regularity that they are overripe for spoofing.

I can't help wondering, though, what dialogue was originally meant to accompany **Esteban Maroto's** fine illustrations before **Bill DuBay** added his whimsical yet sharp-tongued verbiage to this strip. Perhaps someday we'll be treated to the work in its original, unaltered form.

JERRY GREENBERG
Bronx, N.Y.

Any series starring no less an illuminary than the multi-faceted **Idi Amin** himself, can be nothing short of fascinating. But fifty lashes with the cat-o-nine tails to illustrator **Esteban Maroto** for impersonating fellow artist **Jeff Jones**. Some of **Idi's** poses in issue #4 are straight from **Jones'** **Idyl**.

WES INGALLS
Seattle, Wash.

Idi not like you fellas make fun from him. **Idi** send bang-bang squad put big holes in you bodies. Better still, **Idi** whip out big well-hung manhood and beat you profusely on head and shoulders.

President, Field Marshall,
Doctor and Chief **IDI AMIN**
Kampala, Uganda

WHY NOT A BOOK OF FULL-COLOR CORBEN?

I felt that I simply had to write and compliment the genius of **Richard Corben's** "Mutant World."

I was pleased to see that **Corben** wrote and illustrated the first two episodes of the series. But I was disappointed to discover that **Jan Strnad** scripted chapters three and four. Even though the art is still excellent, the storyline in these latter chapters is not nearly as good as it was in the first two.

Why did you change authors in mid-series?

JULIAN HEATH
New York, N.Y.

The decision was **Rich Corben's** **Julian**. He and author **Jan Strnad** have worked together often and built a mutual respect for one another's talents. **Rich** felt that **Jan** could bring both purpose and direction to "Mutant World."

Yet, as much as we liked **Rich's** stories, we feel that **Jan**, too, is doing an excellent job with the series.

Never have I seen such beauty, such innovation, such artistic perfection in comic art as in **Richard Corben's** "Ogre." His new photographic art technique was a predictable but no less exciting step in his evolution as the master of graphic artists.

MARK FORQUER
Temperance, Mich.

That's a fact, **Mark**. "Ogre" was the perfect showcase for **Rich Corben's** many talents. It displayed his photographic, sculpting and artistic skills. It showed us that he wouldn't make a bad motion picture director, either.

So you've finally seen the light. With issue #4 you're featuring sixteen pages of exotic **Richard Corben** color. Now how about an issue with full-color from cover-to-cover?

ED BAUMGARTNER
Mount Vernon, N.Y.

We'd like nothing better. But because of the prohibitive cost of color printing and quality paper, we'd have to pass the added expense on to our readers. And we're not too sure that there's a really big market out there for copies of 1984 magazine that are priced at \$9.95 each.



ASIMOV, REDZONE ONE AND THE SAME?

It's just a wild hunch, but I'd venture to speculate that the name **Alabaster Redzone** is a pseudonym. Now why would anyone who writes so obviously well, as does this **Redzone** chap, wish to conceal his true identity?

Could it be that he is ashamed to have his true name associated with mere comic books? Or does he fear that his mother will give him a sound thrashing when she discovers that her little darling is writing kiddie porn?

HINDS SWINDON
Hinckley, England

Alabaster Redzone is really **Isaac Asimov** moonlighting for the funnies, right?

KATHY KEETON
Grandy, Minn.

Alabaster Redzone, **Jim Stenstrom**, **Bill DuBay** and **Kurt Vonnegut** all have a crisp, fluid, unique but identical style of writing. Is it possible that they are all the same person?

CHRISTY GIACALONE
Kelso, Wash.

No. But they could all be clones of **Paday Chayefsky**.

I pity the poor little shit who had to grow up with a name like **Alabaster Redzone**. His parents must have been heartless fiends indeed.

TYCONDEROGA VISHNIAC
Ekalaka, Mont.

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PROLOGUE

FAR NORTH OF HERE, FARTHER NORTH THAN WHERE EVEN SGT. PRESTON DARES TO VENTURE, REX HAVOC AND THE ASSKICKERS OF THE FANTASTIC RESPOND TO AN **EMERGENCY CALL** FROM THE REMOTE DEW LINE STATION **CHILLY WILLY**. FROM FAIRBANKS, ALASKA, THEY DRIVE QUICKLY TO THE OUTPOST, ALTHOUGH THEY ARE IN AN AIR-PLANE.



REX, MAYBE WE SHOULD HAVE WAITED FOR THE PILOT...?

NO TIME TO SPARE, LARS. WE'VE BEEN SUMMONED ON A MATTER OF **GRAVEST URGENCY!**

SURRENDER AT ONCE OR DIE! YOU ARE ALL UNDER ARREST FOR BREACHING A **TOP-SECURITY AREA!**

AMERICANS! AMERICANS!

OOFF! GRRA!

CRUUNACH!



THERE MUST BE SOME MISTAKE, CAPTAIN. WE'RE NOT **SPIES**. WE WERE CALLED HERE!

WE'RE THE ASSKICKERS OF THE FANTASTIC!

ASSKICKERS! OH, EXCUSE ME, FOLKS. I'M CAPTAIN **TOBEY**, POST COMMANDER. I'M THE ONE WHO CALLED YOU.



LARS WURLITZER, MAJOR, RETIRED. AND THESE KIDS ARE **BRUNHILDA ZAGWIDES** AND **SPRINGER SUNDÆ**.

I'VE READ YOUR BOOKS ON SUPER-ABNORMAL PHENOMENA WITH GREAT INTEREST, MAJOR... PARTICULARLY THAT PAMPHLET ON **EXTRATERRESTIALS** FOUND FROZEN IN THE ARTIC TUNDRA. I THINK WE HAVE ONE, SIR.

OOFF! SLUG! SOCK! GRRA! CRUNCH!



C'MON, REX! WE'RE GOING TO BEAT UP SOME **ALIENS!**

WHAT? I THOUGHT THAT'S WHAT I WAS DOIN' --!

YOU HAVE A FROZEN E.T.?

IT'S IN THE FREEZER.

YOU HAVE A FREEZER?



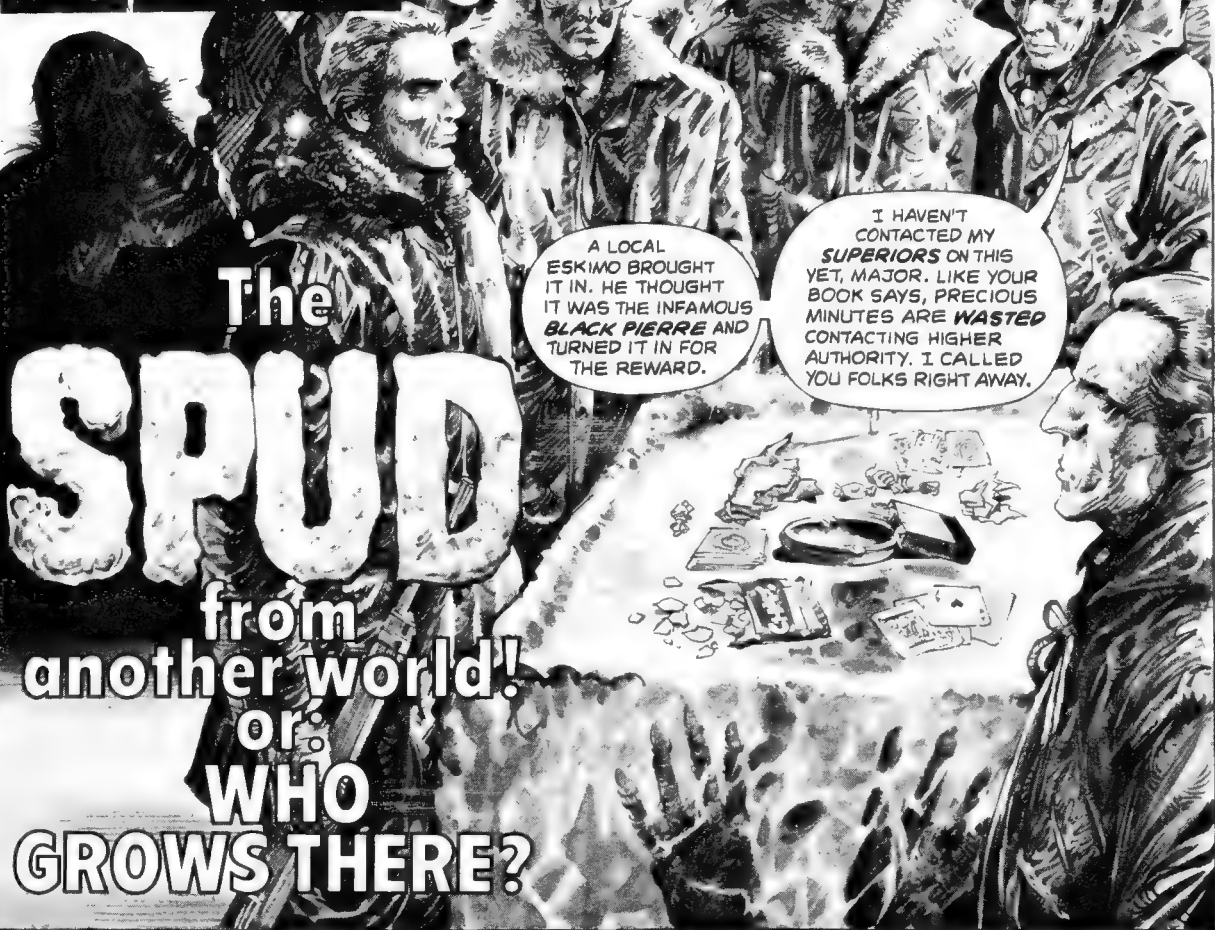
Rex Havoc

and the

ASSKICKERS of the FANTASTIC



WITHIN THE FREEZER, AN ICEBLOCK OF EXTREME AGE LIES BEFORE THE ASSKICKERS. AND ENCASED IN IT, AN ENORMOUS CREATURE OF UNEARTHLY ORIGIN. BUT WHERE DID IT *COME FROM*? IS THE UNSPOKEN QUESTION. HOW DID THIS CREATURE *GET* HERE? HAS IT COME TO *DESTROY THE WORLD AND GRAZE* ON THE HUMAN RACE...OR IS IT JUST *SMALL POTATOES*?



A LOCAL
ESKIMO BROUGHT
IT IN. HE THOUGHT
IT WAS THE INFAMOUS
BLACK PIERRE AND
TURNED IT IN FOR
THE REWARD.

I HAVEN'T
CONTACTED MY
SUPERIORS ON THIS
YET, MAJOR. LIKE YOUR
BOOK SAYS, PRECIOUS
MINUTES ARE *WASTED*
CONTACTING HIGHER
AUTHORITY. I CALLED
YOU FOLKS RIGHT AWAY.

The
SPUD
from
another world!
or:
**WHO
GROWS THERE?**



HMMM. IT'S RADIOACTIVE! THAT WOULD CONFIRM THAT IT IS EXTRATERRESTRIAL! HOW OLD IS THIS BLOCK?

WE DATE IT BACK TWENTY MILLION YEARS.

FROM TODAY? I NEED FRESH DATA.

UH, NO, FROM YESTERDAY. I'LL GET ANOTHER TEST ON IT.



MY GUESS IS THIS CREATURE CRASH-LANDED HERE, AND WAS UNABLE TO ESCAPE BEFORE THE ICE AGE ROLLED IN.

SEE THIS STRAW? IT'S A BREATHING TUBE. THE CREATURE MUST HAVE JAMMED IT UP TO THE SURFACE JUST BEFORE HE COMPLETELY FROZE OVER.



YOU MEAN, IT MIGHT STILL BE ALIVE? AFTER ALL THESE CENTURIES?

IT'S NOT IMPOSSIBLE, CAPTAIN. IN A STATE OF DEEP YOGA MEDITATION... IF IT KEPT ITS MIND OFF FOOD... IT COULD BE VERY MUCH ALIVE. SWEDISH PEOPLE DO IT ALL THE TIME.

FORTUNATELY, YOU CALLED US IN TIME. WE'LL HAVE THIS MONSTER-SICLE DESTROYED IN A JIFFY.



HAS ANYBODY CONSIDERED IT MAY NOT BE A MONSTER? IF THIS IS A VISITOR FROM SPACE, THEN IT IS OF ENORMOUS SCIENTIFIC VALUE, AND EVERY ATTEMPT MUST BE MADE TO REVIVE IT... TO TRY AND COMMUNICATE WITH IT!

WHO IS THIS BIRD?

DR. CORNTHWAITE, A BOTANIST FROM WASHINGTON, HERE TO STUDY ARCTIC FAUNA.



WHY IS IT WHENEVER WE TRY TO DO OUR JOB, WE ALWAYS RUN UP AGAINST YOU SCIENTISTS?!

ET'S DON'T WANT TO COMMUNICATE! THEY WANT TO KILL, AND TAKE OVER THE EARTH, AND STEAL OUR PORCELAIN PRODUCTS!

EH, I, EH, JUST THOUGHT YOU'D APPRECIATE A DISSIDENTING POINT OF VIEW!



CAPTAIN TOBEY... WHAT DO YOU WANT DONE WITH THE CREATURE?

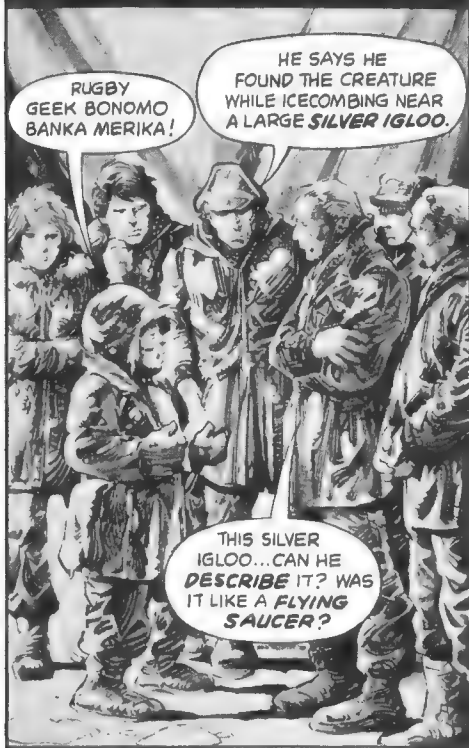
SCIENCE, SHMIENCE, I HAVE A STATION TO THINK ABOUT. GET RID OF IT!



WISE CHOICE, CAPTAIN. THIS WILL TAKE CARE OF THE FELLOW IN THE BLOCK.

NOW SHOW US THAT ESKIMO WHO BROUGHT IT IN.

OUTSIDE, THE GROUP CONFRONTS OLD BOOKNOOK. CAPTAIN TOBEY ACTS AS INTERPRETER.



RUGBY
GEEK BONOMO
BANKA MERIKA!

HE SAYS HE
FOUND THE CREATURE
WHILE ICECOMBING NEAR
A LARGE **SILVER IGLOO**.

THIS SILVER
IGLOO...CAN HE
DESCRIBE IT? WAS
IT LIKE A **FLYING
SAUCER?**

NO, NOT A
FLYING SAUCER.
MORE LIKE A BIG
**DINTY MOORE
CAN.**

HE FOUND
NOTHING VALUABLE
INSIDE IT... JUST A
LOT OF PERPETUAL-
MOTION AND PROFOUND
SOLUTIONS TO OUR
WORLD'S CRISES.

NUG
MUNCHY...NUG
MAZUMA
NESBITT....!

NO FOOD...
NO RETURNABLE
BOTTLES...!

WELL, CAN
HE TELL US
WHERE HE
FOUND THIS
SILVER
IGLOO?



**NYOKA
BAKKE! AKA!
SLUGGO
LULU!**

WHAT'S HE
SAYING? WHAT'S
HE **SAYING?**



HE SAYS
HE **FORGOT** WHERE
IT WAS. HE HAS
A GOOD IDEA...!
MAYBE WE COULD
HIRE HIM AS CAMP
MAP-MAKER OR
SOMETHING.

AH WELL. **ET'S**
ALMOST ALWAYS TRAVEL
ALONE ANYWAY! I DON'T
THINK WE HAVE TO
WORRY ABOUT ANY
MORE OF THEM BEING
AROUND. CASE CLOSED!



GIVE ME ALL
YOUR...NINES.
NO TENS. NO
ELEVENS!

CHRIST,
MAN. WHAT
GAME ARE YOU
PLAYING?

AIR! GIVE
ME AIR!



YOU SAY
SOMETHING?

I SAID
GIVE ME ALL
YOUR ELEVENS.

NO, DIDN'T
YOU SAY, "AIR!
GIVE ME AIR!"?

I DON'T
THINK SO.



AIR!!

GAAAP!

OH,
SHIT!



CRASH!

EEEK!

HALP! CHOKING!

**CARNAGE! ASSAULT
WITH INTENT
TO MURDER!**



GOOD LORD! THEY'RE TWISTED LIKE DISHRAGS!

ICE EVERYWHERE! THE CREATURE'S BUSTED OUT!



LOOK! HE WENT RIGHT THROUGH THE WALL!

AND THERE HE GOES NOW!!

I'LL BRING 'IM BACK!



GIVE IT TO HIM, BOY!

FIX HIS WAGON, REX!

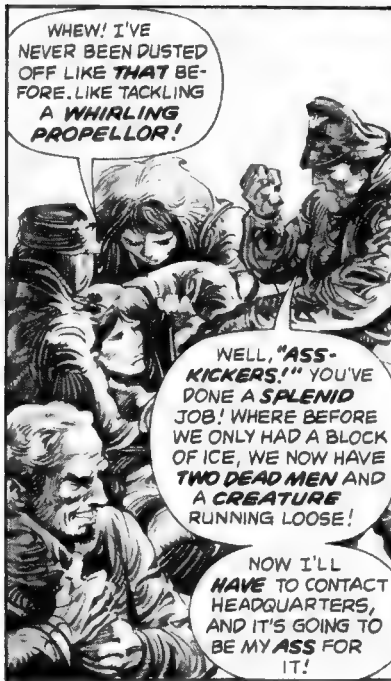
C'MERE, YOU! YEAH, I'M TALKIN' TO YOU!

CAREFUL, REX! HE LOOKS PRETTY...



...TOUGH!

BAM!



WHEW! I'VE NEVER BEEN DUSTED OFF LIKE THAT BEFORE. LIKE TACKLING A WHIRLING PROPELLOR!

WELL, "ASS-KICKERS!" YOU'VE DONE A SPLENDID JOB! WHERE BEFORE WE ONLY HAD A BLOCK OF ICE, WE NOW HAVE TWO DEAD MEN AND A CREATURE RUNNING LOOSE!

NOW I'LL HAVE TO CONTACT HEADQUARTERS, AND IT'S GOING TO BE MY ASS FOR IT!



NO, DON'T DO THAT YET.

THESE BOYS... AS WELL AS BEING TIED INTO KNOTS, HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY DRAINED OF BLOOD. WE DON'T KNOW WHAT ELSE THIS CREATURE IS CAPABLE OF, AND IF YOU CALL IN YOUR BOSSES, THEY'LL ONLY MESS THINGS UP WORSE.

WE'VE A DELICATE SITUATION HERE, WHICH ONLY THE ASSKICKERS CAN RESOLVE. YOU MUST GIVE US A CHANCE TO PLAN.



IT'S MORE DELICATE THAN THAT, MAJOR. THOSE MEN WERE THE ONLY PRIVATES WE HAD ON THIS BASE. NOW WE DON'T HAVE ANYBODY TO WORK IN THE KITCHEN!

AND SINCE IT'S YOUR FAULT THE MONSTER IS LOOSE AND OUR KP'S ARE DEAD, YOU FOLKS WILL HAVE TO TAKE OVER THEIR DUTIES UNTIL I CAN GET SOME REPLACEMENTS!

GASP!

CHOKES! NOT THAT!

BY SEVENTEEN HUNDRED HOURS, REX HAVOC
AND HIS KITCHEN POLICE ARE DOLING OUT
THE EVENING MEAL.

MAJOR, YOU
SEEM TO BE THE **REAL**
BRAINS OF THIS TEAM. SURELY
YOU MUST SEE THAT THIS CREATURE
...WHATEVER IT IS... IS CERTAINLY
SUPERIOR TO HUMANS IN **EVERY**
WAY. WE SHOULD BE **GREETING**
IT, NOT TRYING TO DESTROY IT.
WOULDN'T YOU **RECONSIDER...**?

HAVE A
NICE DAY,
DOCTOR.

REX...I'M
OUT OF MASHED
POTATOES. GO INTO
THE KITCHEN AND
GET ANOTHER
POTFUL!

SPRINGER
AIN'T DOIN'
NUTHIN'.

REX!

GRUMBLE!
AW RATS. THE
LIGHT BULB
WENT OUT.

WAIT A
MINUTE. SOME-
THING LARS
TOLD ME
ONCE...!

LIGHT BULBS
DON'T GO OUT
BY THEM-
SELVES...!

MONSTERS
PUT THEM
OUT!

CRASH! **NOISE!**
YEOW!
RUCKUS! **FUSS!**

REX!
WAS IT THE
CREATURE?
DID YOU **KILL**
IT?

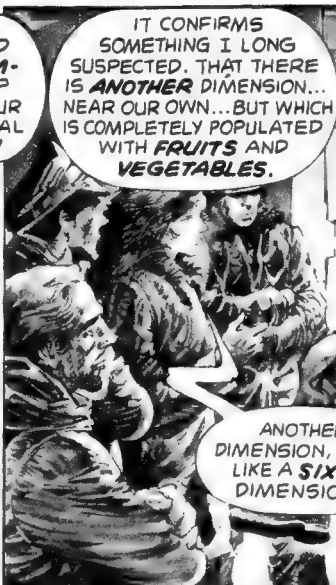
NAH! HE
ESCAPED THROUGH
THE KITCHEN WINDOW.
BUT HE DIDN'T GET
AWAY ENTIRELY...!

HE LEFT
THIS
BEHIND.



REMARKABLE!
NO BLOOD OR NERVE-
ENDINGS... ENTIRELY
CELLULAR GROWTH.
IT'S **PLANT**, NOT
ANIMAL.

AND SEE
THE "**EYES**"? AND
THE **ALUMINUM-
FOIL** SPACESUIT?
GENTLEMAN...OUR
EXTRATERRESTRIAL
IS...A **POTATO**!

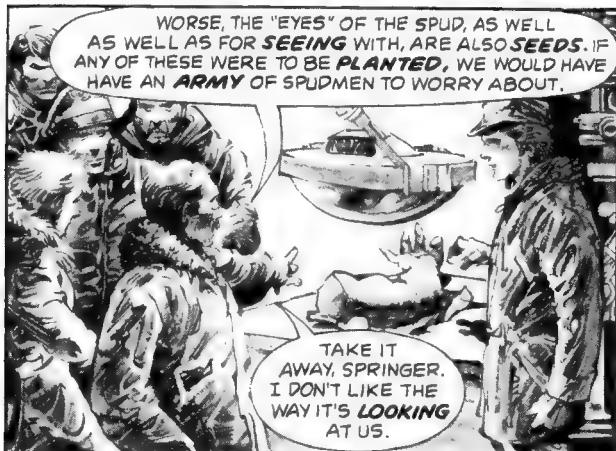


IT CONFIRMS
SOMETHING I LONG
SUSPECTED. THAT THERE
IS **ANOTHER** DIMENSION...
NEAR OUR OWN...BUT WHICH
IS COMPLETELY POPULATED
WITH **FRUITS** AND
VEGETABLES.

THIS IS NOT A
HASTY CONCLUSION. THERE
ARE FAR TOO MANY CHEF'S
SALADS AVAILABLE FOR THE
CROPS YIELDED. THEREFORE,
THE EXTRA PRODUCE IS
COMING FROM SOMEPLACE
ELSE.

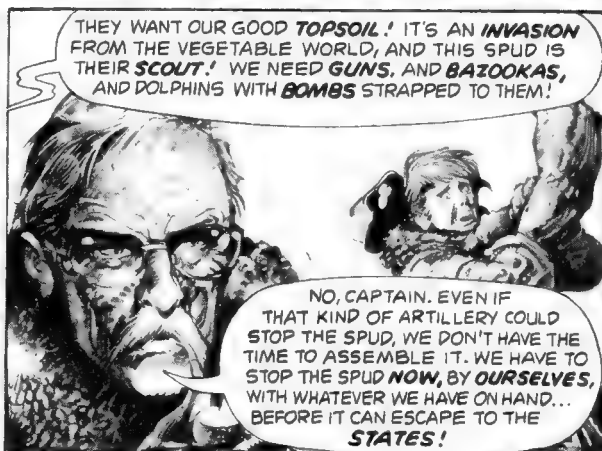
ANOTHER
DIMENSION, LARS?
LIKE A **SIXTH**
DIMENSION?

NO,
BRUNO.
LIKE A **V-8**
DIMENSION.



WORSE, THE "**EYES**" OF THE SPUD, AS WELL
AS WELL AS FOR **SEEING** WITH, ARE ALSO **SEEDS**. IF
ANY OF THESE WERE TO BE **PLANTED**, WE WOULD HAVE
HAVE AN **ARMY** OF SPUDMEN TO WORRY ABOUT.

TAKE IT
AWAY, SPRINGER.
I DON'T LIKE THE
WAY IT'S **LOOKING**
AT US.



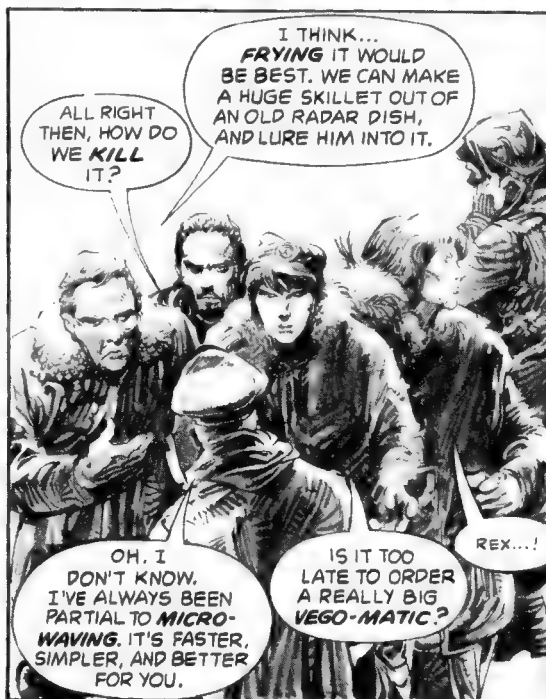
THEY WANT OUR GOOD **TOPSOIL**! IT'S AN **INVASION**
FROM THE VEGETABLE WORLD, AND THIS SPUD IS
THEIR **SCOUT**! WE NEED **GUNS**, AND **BAZOOKAS**,
AND DOLPHINS WITH **BOMBS** STRAPPED TO THEM!

NO, CAPTAIN. EVEN IF
THAT KIND OF ARTILLERY COULD
STOP THE SPUD, WE DON'T HAVE THE
TIME TO ASSEMBLE IT. WE HAVE TO
STOP THE SPUD **NOW**, BY **OURSELVES**,
WITH WHATEVER WE HAVE ON HAND...
BEFORE IT CAN ESCAPE TO THE
STATES!



JUST
LEAVE HIM TO
ME, LARS. I'LL
KICK THE **CROP**
OUT OF THAT
WALKING TV
DINNER!

I'M SORRY,
REX. STRONG AS
YOU ARE, YOU'RE
NO MATCH FOR
THE SPUD. WE
MUST BE
CLEVER. LEAVE
THIS ONE TO
US, OKAY?



I THINK...
FRYING IT WOULD
BE BEST. WE CAN MAKE
A HUGE SKILLET OUT OF
AN OLD RADAR DISH,
AND LURE HIM INTO IT.

ALL RIGHT
THEN, HOW DO
WE **KILL**
IT?

OH, I
DON'T KNOW.
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN
PARTIAL TO **MICRO-
WAVING**. IT'S FASTER,
SIMPLER, AND BETTER
FOR YOU.

IS IT TOO
LATE TO ORDER
A REALLY BIG
VEGO-MATIC?

REX...!



REX,
WHERE ARE
YOU GOING?

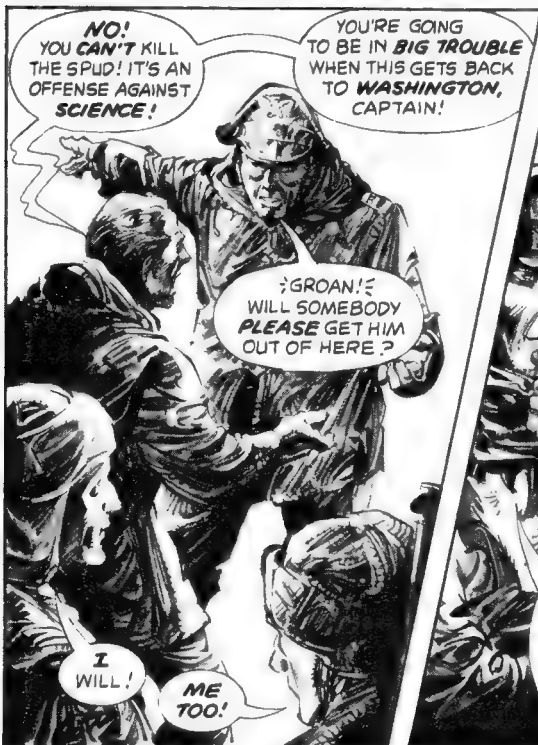
GOIN' FOR A
WALK. IF EVERYBODY
IS GOING TO BE GETTING
INTO BRAINY MATTERS,
I DON'T WANT TO
GET IN THE WAY.

DON'T
WORRY. I'VE
GOT A WALKIE-
TALKIE, SO I WON'T
GET **LOST**, IF THAT'S
WHAT YOU'RE WORRY-
ING ABOUT.



IT'S
DECIDED THEN.
WE'LL FRY THE SPUD.
BUT WE'LL USE **LOW-
FAT CORN OIL** INSTEAD
OF BUTTER.

NOW, ABOUT
THE
SEASONING...!



NO!
YOU **CAN'T** KILL
THE SPUD! IT'S AN
OFFENSE AGAINST
SCIENCE!

YOU'RE GOING
TO BE IN **BIG TROUBLE**
WHEN THIS GETS BACK
TO **WASHINGTON,**
CAPTAIN!

♫GROAN!♫
WILL SOMEBODY
PLEASE GET HIM
OUT OF HERE?

I
WILL!

ME
TOO!



I HOPE I
HAVEN'T MADE
A TRAGIC MISTAKE
HERE. I'VE STAKED
EVERYTHING... MY
CAREER, AS WELL AS
THE **LIVES** OF MY MEN
...ON THREE MISFITS
AND AN APE WITH
BRAIN DEATH.

IF YOU
PEOPLE CAN'T
STOP THE SPUD, IT
MAY BE TOO LATE
FOR EVEN THE **COM-
BINED MILITARY**
COMPLEX TO DO
ANYTHING ABOUT
IT NOW.



HEY,
BUSTER! THE
MONSTER AIN'T
BEEN SEWED
TOGETHER THAT
THE ASSKICKERS
CAN'T STOP!

I CAN'T
STAND THIS.
WHO DOES HE
THINK HE **IS,**
CASTING DIS-
PERSIONS ON
ASSKICKERS?

EASY, SON.
THE CAPTAIN IS
RIGHT. WE'VE YET
TO PROVE OUR-
SELVES HERE.

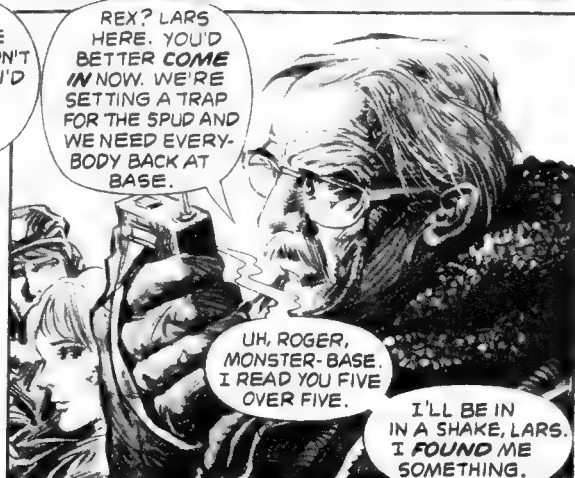
I SUGGEST
WE STOP THIS
QUIBBLING, AND
GET READY FOR
OUR CONFRONTATION
WITH THE SPUD.



SAY...
WHERE THE DEVIL HAS
REX DIS-
APPEARED TO, ANY-
WAY?

HE'S WALKING
AROUND OUT THERE
SOMEPLACE. I COULDN'T
STOP HIM. MAYBE YOU'D
BETTER CALL HIM...
HE'S BEEN GONE A
LONG TIME.

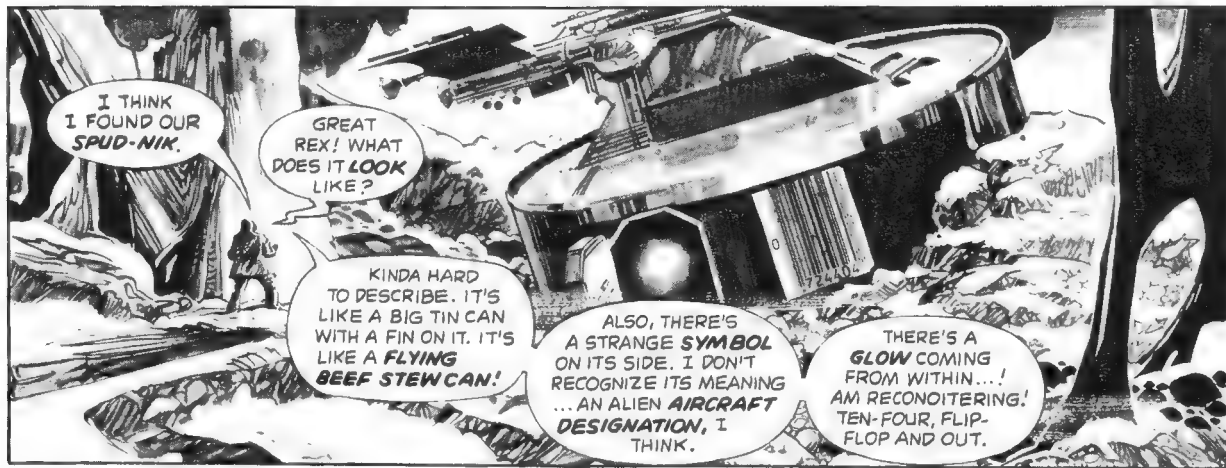
YEAH, I'D
BETTER. BEFORE
HE GETS HIMSELF
COMPLETELY
LOST.



REX? LARS
HERE. YOU'D
BETTER **COME**
IN NOW. WE'RE
SETTING A TRAP
FOR THE SPUD AND
WE NEED EVERY-
BODY BACK AT
BASE.

UH, ROGER,
MONSTER-BASE.
I READ YOU FIVE
OVER FIVE.

I'LL BE IN
IN A SHAKE, LARS.
I **FOUND** ME
SOMETHING.



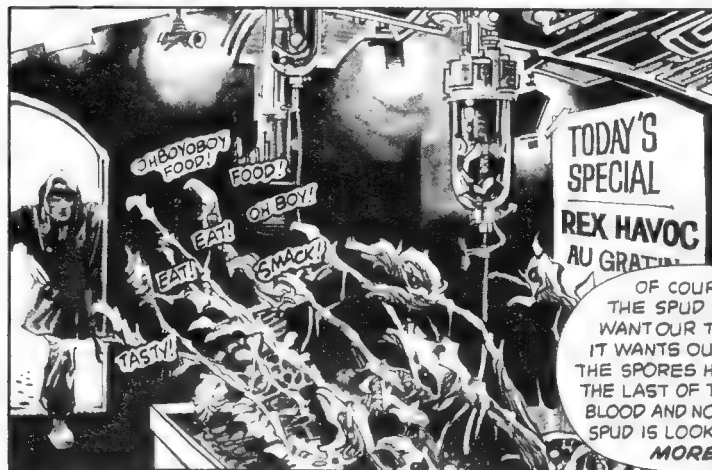
I THINK
I FOUND OUR
SPUD-NIK.

GREAT
REX! WHAT
DOES IT LOOK
LIKE?

KINDA HARD
TO DESCRIBE. IT'S
LIKE A BIG TIN CAN
WITH A FIN ON IT. IT'S
LIKE A **FLYING
BEEF STEW CAN!**

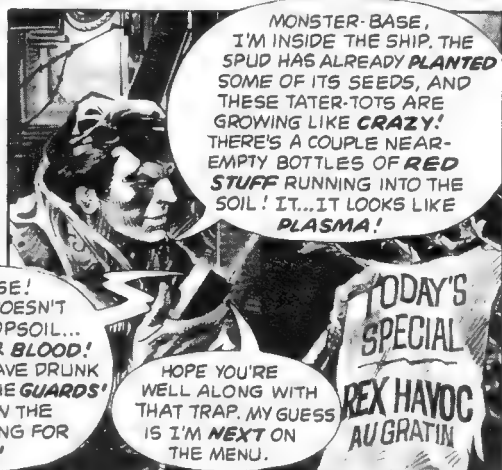
ALSO, THERE'S
A STRANGE **SYMBOL**
ON ITS SIDE. I DON'T
RECOGNIZE ITS MEANING
... AN ALIEN **AIRCRAFT
DESIGNATION**, I
THINK.

THERE'S A
GLOW COMING
FROM WITHIN...!
AM RECONOITERING!
TEN-FOUR, FLIP-
FLOP AND OUT.



TODAY'S
SPECIAL
REX HAVOC
AU GRATIN

OF COURSE!
THE SPUD DOESN'T
WANT OUR TOPSOIL...
IT WANTS OUR **BLOOD!**
THE SPORES HAVE DRUNK
THE LAST OF THE **GUARDS'**
BLOOD AND NOW THE
SPUD IS LOOKING FOR
MORE!



MONSTER-BASE,
I'M INSIDE THE SHIP. THE
SPUD HAS ALREADY **PLANTED**
SOME OF ITS SEEDS, AND
THESE TATER-TOTS ARE
GROWING LIKE **CRAZY!**
THERE'S A COUPLE NEAR-
EMPTY BOTTLES OF **RED
STUFF** RUNNING INTO THE
SOIL! IT...IT LOOKS LIKE
PLASMA!

HOPE YOU'RE
WELL ALONG WITH
THAT TRAP. MY GUESS
IS I'M **NEXT** ON
THE MENU.



REX! YOU
MUST **DESTROY**
THOSE PLANTS! **BURN**
THEM DOWN! DO
IT **QUICKLY!**

DO YOU
HEAR ME,
REX?

UH, ROGER
ON THE BURNING,
MONSTER-BASE.

BUT
THERE'S A
SMALL
PROBLEM....!



EVERYTIME I LIGHT A
MATCH, THE PLANTS
BLOW IT OUT!

PUFF! PUFF!
PUFF!
PUFF!

I'M
ALMOST OUT
OF MATCHES.
CAN'T I JUST
STOMP THEM
TO DEATH?

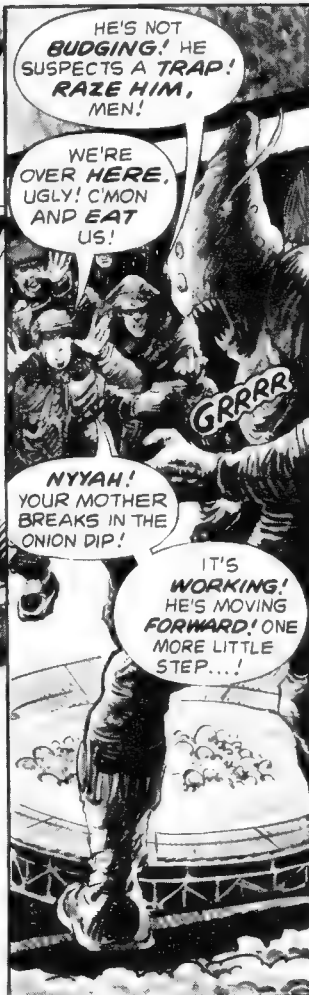
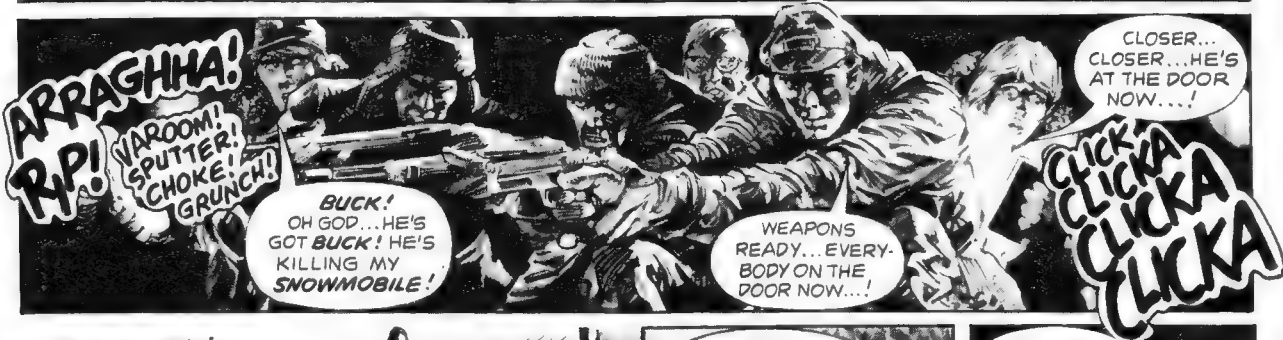
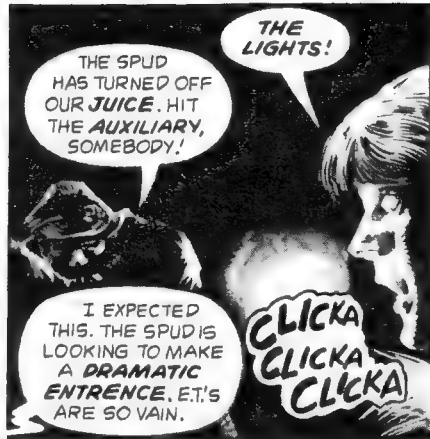
NEGATIVE!
WE CAN'T CHANCE
ANY OF THEM **SURVIV-**
ING! THEY HAVE TO BE
BURNED! LOOK AROUND
THE SHIP...! THERE MUST
BE **SOMETHING** YOU
CAN BURN THEM WITH!

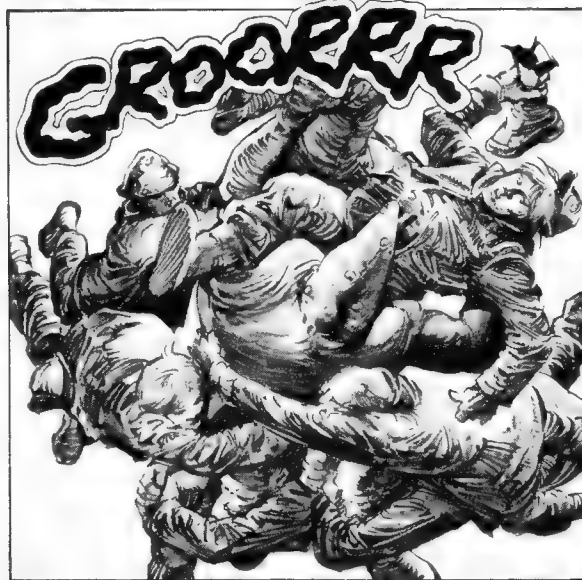


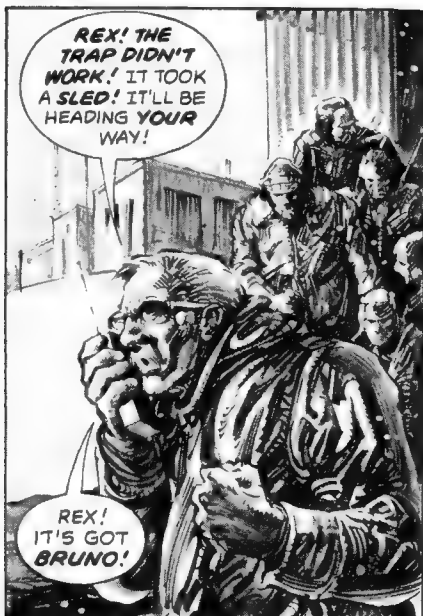
CLICK!

LARS! I
JUST GOT...AN
IDEA!

I KNOW
HOW I CAN GET
A **TERRIFIC**
BLAZE GOING!









FORTY MINUTES LATER...!

THEY'RE
ALL RIGHT!

THANK
GOD!

WHAT
DO YOU
THINK, REX?
LONG
ENOUGH?

WHERE'S
THE
SPUD?

YEAH,
FORTY MINUTES
SHOULD DO IT.

MM-MMM.
PIPIN' HOT
HASHBROWNS!

TASTY.

PLOOP!
CRACKLE
SIZZLE **SIZZLE**

GREAT
WORK, REX.
WE'LL TURN THE
SPUD OVER TO THE
HUNGRY ESKIMO
ORPHANS, OF
COURSE. BUT
TELL ME...!

HOW'D
YOU GET THAT
BLAZE GOING
WITHOUT ANY
MATCHES?

SIMPLE
TRICK I
LEARNED IN
THE **BOY**
SCOUTS.

FASTEST
WAY TO START
A FIRE...IS TO PUT
A **PENNY** IN THE
FUSE-BOX.

AND
THAT'S
WHAT I
DID!

MOAN! ALL
THAT EQUIPMENT...
DESTROYED. YOU'LL
HAVE MUCH TO
ANSWER FOR,
CAPTAIN TOBEY.

SIGH!
YEAH, I KNOW,
CORNTHWAITE!
I KNOW.

WELL, CHALK
UP ANOTHER ONE
FOR THE ASSKICKERS.
OUR BILL WILL BE
IN THE MORNING
MAIL.

OH, CAPTAIN.
WOULD IT BE OKAY IF
WE TOOK ONE OF YOUR
SLEDS BACK TO FAIR-
BANKS? OUR PLANE
IS...UH...**BENT**!

YES...
PLEASE...
ANYTHING...

...JUST
GO.

HEY, LARS!
LET **ME** DRIVE,
OKAY?

EH, I
DUNNO,
REX...!

SERGEANT,
CRANK UP THE
RADIO. GET ME
FAIRBANKS.

FAIRBANKS?
THERE ARE FOUR
PEOPLE HEADING YOUR
WAY WHO CALL THEMSELVES
THE **ASSKICKERS OF THE**
FANTASTIC. TO EVERYONE
LISTENING TO MY VOICE,
I BRING YOU THIS
WARNING:

WATCH
THESE
GUYS!


I **REPEAT**:
TELL THE **WORLD**...
TELL EVERYBODY
WHEREVER THEY
ARE: **WATCH**
THESE GUYS!

ON
DANCER! ON
PRANCER! ON
CHICKLETS AND
BEECHNUT!

CHEEZ...
WHY DOESN'T
THIS THING GET
AIRBORNE?

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UH OH, HAPPY JIM!
WE'RE UNDER ATTACK BY
VORACIOUS VENUSIAN VULVE-NYMPHS!
BUT WHAT WOULD THEY WANT
WITH *US*?

AW, GEE, HAPPY JIM...
CAN'T WE JUST THIS ONCE
GIVE *IN* TO THEIR VILE
LUSTS?

THEY'RE EITHER AFTER
OUR *BODIES* OR OUR LATEST
ISSUE OF *1984*, SKEEZIX!

BUT TORTURE ME AS THEY
WISH WITH THEIR FIENDISH SEXUAL
PERVERSIONS, THEY'LL NOT GET *HAPPY
JIM SUNBLASTER* TO GIVE UP THAT
WHICH HE HOLDS MOST DEAR!

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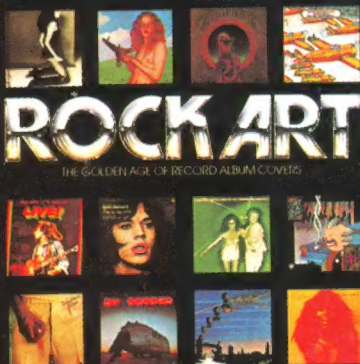
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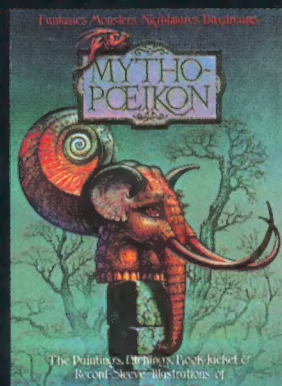
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